NATION

India has 13 of world's 20 most polluted cities

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BUSINESS

IndusInd stock tanks 23%; hits 52-week low

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SPORTS

Newcastle beats West Ham to reach League Cup final

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Gold smuggling case: Probe ordered into DGP Rao's role

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

The Karnataka government has appointed Additional Chief Secretary Gaurav Gupta to investigate the potential involvement of DGP rank officer K Ramachandra Rao in the alleged gold smuggling activities of his stepdaughter, Kannada actress Ranya Rao. The Chief Minister's office announced the decision on Tuesday following an order issued late Monday night. Additionally, a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) inquiry has been mandated to examine alleged lapses and dereliction of duty by police officers at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru. Ramachandra Rao currently serves as the Managing Director of the Karnataka State Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation. *—Salar News*

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US Intelligence Chief Tulsi Gabbard to visit India

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, 11 MARCH

US Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Tulsi Gabbard said she will visit India as part a "multi-nation" trip to the Indo-Pacific she is undertaking with the aim of building strong relationships and open lines of communication to achieve President Donald Trump's objectives of peace and freedom. Her first stop will be Honolulu where she will visit "IC partners and US Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM)" leaders, and "our troops engaging in training." Gabbard had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier in February during his visit to Washington DC for the bilateral meeting with Trump in the White House. *—PTI*

Starlink internet coming to India soon

Airtel signs deal with SpaceX for high-speed net

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

Telecom operator Bharti Airtel on Tuesday said it has partnered with Elon Musk's SpaceX for providing Starlink's high-speed internet services to its customers in India.

This agreement is subject to SpaceX receiving authorisations to sell Starlink's satellite communications-based services in India, Airtel said in a statement.

The agreement will enable Airtel and SpaceX to further explore how Starlink could complement and expand Airtel's offerings, and how Airtel's expertise in the Indian market could complement SpaceX's direct offerings to consumers and businesses.

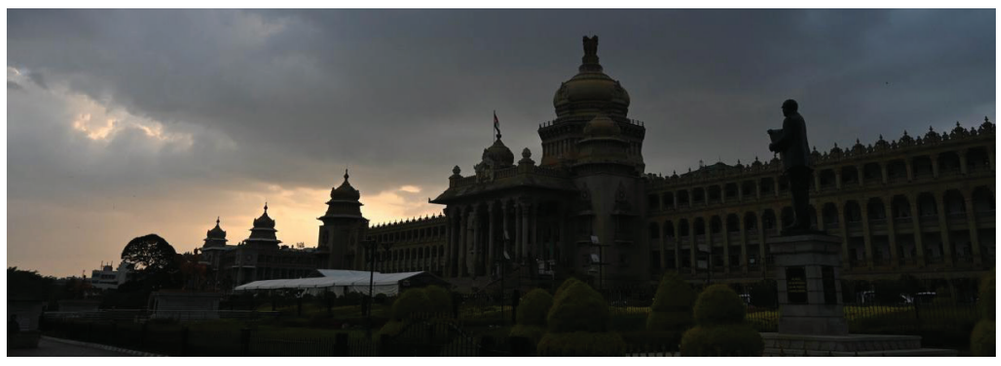
Bharti Airtel Managing Director and Vice Chairman Gopal Vittal said that working with SpaceX to offer Starlink services to Airtel customers in India is a significant milestone and further demonstrates company's commitment to next-generation satellite connectivity.

airtel
STARLINK
• Agreement is subject to receiving authorisations to sell Starlink's satellite communications-services in India

"This collaboration enhances our ability to bring world-class high-speed broadband to even the most remote parts of India, ensuring that every individual, business, and community has reliable internet. Starlink will complement and enhance Airtel's suite of products to ensure reliable and affordable broadband for our Indian customers – wherever they live and work," Vittal said.

Under the pact, Airtel and SpaceX will explore offering Starlink equipment at Airtel's retail stores, Starlink services via Airtel to business customers, opportunities to connect communities, schools, and health centres, among many others, in even the most distant rural parts of India. *—PTI*

CITY'S SUMMER SHOWERS



Bengaluru saw its first summer showers on Tuesday, bringing relief from the scorching heat. Light to moderate rain, driven by an early pre-monsoon, cooled temperatures. Several areas, including KR Market, Majestic, Koramangala, Banashankari, and Indiranagar, received light to moderate rain ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

K'taka Oppn disrupts Assembly over Cong leaders' appointments

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

Proceedings in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly faced significant disruptions on Tuesday as opposition parties BJP and JD(S) protested against the government's appointment of Congress leaders and workers to oversee the implementation of five guarantee schemes.

Opposition members accused the government of undermining the authority of legislators by creating parallel committees staffed with Congress party members as presidents, vice-presidents, and members.

They argued that state funds should not be allocated to pay honourariums to these party workers.

During the Question Hour, JD(S) MLA Krishnappa M P questioned the rationale behind appointing Congress workers to the committees, emphasising that it was inappropriate to use taxpayer money for this purpose. "Are there no Legislators and officials? This is wrong. This is illegal," he asserted. BJP MLA Sunil Kumar echoed these sentiments, highlighting the discrepancies in salary allocations for Anganwadi and Asha workers compared to Congress appointees.

Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka accused the government of merging its interests with the Congress party, insisting that taxpayer money should not fund party operatives. He labelled the appointments as "loot."

In response to the uproar, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar defended the decision, asserting that party workers who helped bring the government to power were justified in overseeing the schemes.

As tensions escalated, Speaker UT Khader adjourned the House. The opposition continued to threaten disruptions, insisting that any financial appropriations be reconsidered. *—PTI*

Bill to rename Varsity tabled

Bengaluru, 11 MARCH

A bill seeking to rename the Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University as the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday. Titled 'The Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University (Amendment) Bill, 2025', which further amends the 2016 Act, was tabled in the Assembly by Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge. *—PTI*

Karnataka surpasses energy conservation target before deadline

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

Karnataka has exceeded its energy conservation target of 744 million kWh ahead of the 2027 deadline, officials said on Tuesday.

The announcement was made during the inauguration of the Second Stakeholder Workshop on implementing the state's Energy Conservation and Energy Efficiency Policy 2022-27.

Speaking at the event, KP Rudrappaiah, Managing Director, Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited (KREDL), said, "More than 800 million units have been conserved through energy efficiency measures, surpassing the target of 744 million kWh. This was accomplished by setting sector-specific targets."

"KREDL, the nodal agency for implementing the energy conservation and efficiency policy, is confident of making further progress in consultation with relevant departments and energy sector leaders.

The state is at the forefront of clean energy production and the development of innovative energy resources. *—PTI*

WFI suspension revoked, Sanjay Singh now in-charge

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

The Sports Ministry has revoked the suspension imposed on the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), ending the months of uncertainty surrounding the sport and paving the way for resumption of activities, including selection trials for the upcoming Asian Championship in Amman to be held in Amman, Jordan from 25 March.

The ministry had suspended the WFI on 24 December, 2023 for lapses in governance and procedural integrity by the new body, which was elected on 21 December. The **Sanjay Singh**-led body had announced the conduct of Under-15 and Under-20 National Championships in Nandini Nagar, Gonda – the stronghold of former WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh – and the choice of venue irked the government since the former BJP MP was facing charges of sexual harassment.

The ministry, in its order issued on Monday, said that the WFI has taken compliant measures, so in larger interest of the sport and athletes, the ministry has decided to lift the suspension.

Amidst complaints that the WFI was still operating from the residence of Brij Bhushan, a verification committee performed a spot inspection and found that the Federation had shifted its office to East Vinod Nagar. Satisfied with the corrective measures taken, it ended the suspension. *—PTI*

Mauritius PM bestows country's highest honour on Modi

PORT LOUIS, 11 MARCH

Mauritian Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam on Tuesday announced that his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi will be conferred with the nation's highest honour,

The Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean.

Prime Minister Modi is on a two-day state visit to the island nation. He announced the issuance of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards to his Mauritian counterpart Navin Chandra Ramgoolam and his spouse Veena Ramgoolam.

OCI card grants holders the right to live, work, and study in India indefinitely, while also facilitating visa-free travel and other privileges

Modi received a warm welcome by the Indian diaspora in Mauritius, with the women honouring him with traditional Bihari Geet Gawai performance.

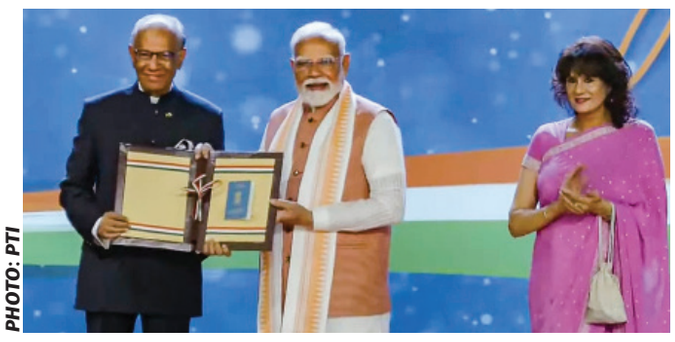


PHOTO: PTI

He also gifted Mauritius President Dharam Gokhool Gangajal from Maha Kumbh and Banarasi saree in a Sadeli box to First Lady Brinda Gokhool.

Modi's visit is expected to include major announcements on the final day, including signing of at least eight Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) in areas such as maritime security, culture and community development projects. *—PTI*

Minor Dalit girl kidnapped, raped by 4 in UP's Ballia

BALLIA, 11 MARCH

A 17-year-old Dalit girl was allegedly kidnapped by four people in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district who took her to Mathura and raped her, police said on Tuesday.

The accused have been identified as Bihari Saini, Ashok Yadav, Jiut Verma, and Arvind Sharma, police said.

The girl, a resident of the Sukhpura police station area in Ballia district, was kidnapped by the accused on March 6. She somehow managed to free herself from them and reached home on 9 March.

Three of the accused are residents of the Sukhpura police station area, Circle Officer (city) Shyamkant said and added that the matter is being investigated. *—PTI*

20 SOLDIERS KILLED

Pak militants hijack train, 182 hostages taken

KARACHI, 11 MARCH

Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has claimed responsibility for hijacking the Jaffar Express in Bolan, Pakistan, taking at least 182 passengers hostage and killing at least 20 soldiers.

Controller, Railways Muhammad Kashif said the train had around 500 passengers on board. The group has warned that any military operation against them will result in the execution of all hostages.

In a statement, the BLA said its fighters carried out a "meticulously planned operation" at Mashkaf, Dhadar, in Bolan. "Our freedom fighters have blown up the railway track, forcing the Jaffar Express to come to a halt.

The fighters swiftly took control of the train, holding all passengers hostage," the group stated.

Issuing a stern warning, the BLA declared, "If the occupying forces attempt any military ops, consequences will be severe ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

Issuing a stern warning, the BLA declared, "If the occupying forces attempt any military operation, the consequences will be severe.

All hundreds of hostages will be executed, and the responsibility for this bloodshed will lie solely with the occupying forces."

The group said the attack was carried out by its specialised units – Majeed Brigade, STOS and Fateh Squad – and vowed to retaliate against any military intervention. "Any military incursion will be met with an equally forceful response," the statement added.

Confirming casualties, the BLA said, "So far, six military personnel have been killed, and hundreds of passengers remain under BLA custody."

Meanwhile, the government directed local authorities in Balochistan province to take "emergency measures".

"The train was stopped by armed men in Tunnel No 8. Efforts are being made to contact the passengers and staff," controller Kashif said.

A provincial government statement said an emergency was imposed at Sibi hospital and ambulances and security forces were on their way to the site. *—PTI with Agencies*

Kharge says sorry over 'thokenge' remark in RS

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

Rajya Sabha witnessed an uproar on Tuesday over an unparliamentary remark by Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge, who apologised to Chair while clarifying that it was meant for the government that was "trying to create a regional divide"

As the Upper House took up a discussion on the working of the Education Ministry soon after the Question Hour, several opposition members were on their feet demanding an apology from minister Pradhan.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha Kharge said, "This is a dictatorship. I request you with folded hands to allow me (to speak). Aapko kya kya thokna hai thik se thokenge, sarkar ko bhi thokenge". *—PTI*

>>>MORE ON PAGE 3

STATE FILM AWARDS

Film Award Selection Advisory Committee headed by BS Lingadev has announced State Film Awards for 2020.

(Best Actor) **PRAJWAL DEVARAJ** ('Gentleman')

Best Actress: **AKSHATHA PANDAVAPURA** ('Pinky Elli')

Best Film: **'PINKY ELLI'** (Director: Prithvi Konanur)

Best Screenplay: **RAGHAVENDRA KUMAR** ('Chandni Bar')

Best Cinematography: **ASHOK KASHYAP** ('Taledanda')

Best Music Direction: **GAGAN BADERIA** ('Malgudi Days')

Best Editing: **NAGENDRA K** ('Act 1978')

City cops crack down on crime: 386 held in Feb sweep

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

Bengaluru Police arrested 386 individuals across 257 cases in February, marking a significant increase from 266 arrests in January. The crackdown targeted illegal gambling, narcotics, human trafficking, and tobacco violations. Authorities registered 24 gambling cases with 125 arrests and 17 betting cases with 18 arrests. Drug enforcement led to 40 NDPS cases, resulting in 55 suspects being taken into custody. Additionally, 15 human trafficking cases saw 18 arrests, while 121 cases were filed under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: SALAR

'Bagar Hukum deeds to be issued within a week'

BIDAR, 11 MARCH

In a recent assembly session, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda announced plans to establish a Bagar Hukum Land Regularisation Committee across all six assembly constituencies in Bidar district within a week. This initiative aims to expedite issuing title deeds to eligible land occupants. The issue was brought to light by Bidar South MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale, who expressed frustration over the absence of the committee, which he argued is causing significant hardships for Bagar Hukum land cultivators in his constituency. He raised concerns about the government's failure to act, questioning whether political bias due to the presence of four BJP MLAs in the district was delaying the committee formation. Minister Byre Gowda affirmed the matter would be resolved promptly, concluding the discussion. *—Salar News*

CID officer held in advocate S Jeeva's suicide case

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

In a significant development regarding the suicide case of advocate and businesswoman S Jeeva, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) has arrested Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Kanakalakshmi on charges of abetment to suicide and soliciting a bribe of Rs 25 lakh from the deceased. Jeeva, aged 33, tragically took her own life on November 22 at her home in Padmanabha Nagar, following an alleged incident of humiliation, harassment, and strip-search during questioning by Kanakalakshmi at the CID office on November 14. The officer reportedly demanded Rs 25 lakh in connection with a case involving the Karnataka Bhovi Development Corporation scam, in which Jeeva was implicated. The scam, uncovered in 2021-22, involved the misappropriation of funds intended for a job scheme benefiting the Bhovi community. In her 13-page suicide note, Jeeva directly blamed Kanakalakshmi. *—Salar News*

Gold smuggling case: Probe ordered into DGP Rao's role

CID, Additional Chief Secretary Gaurav Gupta to investigate

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

The Karnataka government has appointed Additional Chief Secretary Gaurav Gupta to investigate the potential involvement of DGP rank officer K Ramachandra Rao in the alleged gold smuggling activities of his stepdaughter, Kannada actress Ranya Rao. The Chief Minister's office announced the decision on Tuesday following an order issued late Monday night.

Additionally, a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) inquiry has been mandated to examine alleged lapses and dereliction of duty by police officers at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru. Ramachandra Rao currently serves as the Managing Director of the Karnataka State Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation.

DGP K Ramachandra Rao and his stepdaughter Ranya Rao *PHOTO: ANI*

The government order stipulates that ACS Gaurav Gupta must commence the investigation immediately and submit a report within a week. The Director General of Police, the Inspector General of Police, and the Secretary of the Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department have been instructed to provide all necessary documentation and support for the investigation.

Ranya Rao was arrested by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) for allegedly transporting gold bars illegally from Dubai to Bengaluru. Reports indicated that she misused courtesy facilities granted to high-ranking officials at the airport, allegedly leveraging her father's position to avoid security checks.

On 3 March, the DRI seized gold bars valued at Rs 12.56 crore from Ranya at the airport, with an additional seizure of jewellery worth Rs 2.06 crore and cash totalling Rs 2.67 crore from her residence the following day. CBI has also joined the probe.

—Salar News with Agencies

SAFETY FOR ALL

K'taka issues rules for resorts & homestays

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

In the wake of a tragic murder of a tourist from Odisha and the sexual assault of an Israeli tourist and a homestay owner in Koppal district on March 6, the Karnataka government has announced new security guidelines for homestays, resorts, and hotels. The directive aims to enhance safety measures and ensure the protection of all guests, particularly foreign visitors.

Describing the Sanapur incident as "very sad and regrettable," the government underscored the necessity of adhering to these guidelines to avert similar occurrences. The order stipulates that homestays in tourist hotspots must implement adequate security protocols for all guests.

Importantly, the government has mandated that prior information and permission from the relevant police station must be obtained before taking tourists to remote or isolated areas. Homestay owners will be held accountable for any incidents that occur in such locations without prior approval from the police or forest department, facing legal consequences in cases of miscreant activities or wildlife encounters.

District authorities have been instructed to ensure compliance with these guidelines and to compile a list of site visit programmes for risk assessment and safety evaluation. As of now, three individuals have been arrested in connection with the murder case, which occurred after the homestay owner took the tourists to the banks of the Tungabhadra canal for stargazing. *—PTI*

- Homestays, resorts, and hotels in tourist areas must implement strict security protocols.
- Before taking tourists to isolated or remote locations, homestay owners must obtain prior approval from the local police station to prevent security risks.
- Homestay owners will be held responsible for any incidents occurring without proper authorisation.

CM seeks Centre's support for red chilli farmers

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has reached out to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, advocating for the implementation of the Price Deficiency Payment (PDP) scheme under the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for red chillies in the state. In a letter dated March 10, he expressed grave concern for the red chilli farmers in Karnataka, particularly in the Kalyana Karnataka region, who are grappling with an unprecedented crisis due to plummeting prices.

Siddaramaiah noted that while the Government of India has granted approval for the PDP scheme for the Guntur variety of red chillies in Andhra Pradesh—setting the Minimum Intervention Price (MIP) at Rs 11,781 per quintal—Karnataka farmers are still in distress. He highlighted that the production cost for rain-fed Guntur variety chillies has been assessed at Rs 12,675 per quintal, yet farmers are compelled to sell their produce for as little as Rs 8,300 per quintal in markets like Sindhanur.

Will support party workers who brought us to power: DKS

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has defended the government's decision to reward Congress party workers with positions and benefits through government programmes. His comments came in response to MLA MT Krishnappa, who questioned the representation of party workers in the guarantee implementation committees during a discussion in the Legislative Assembly.

Shivakumar stated, "There is nothing wrong in accommodating the party workers who brought the party to power. *—Salar News*

CM Siddaramaiah gets helping hand from Minister Santosh Lad during Mobile Medical Units flag off *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

Soujanya murder case: HC stays FIR against YouTuber

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

Karnataka High Court on Tuesday stayed the First Information Report against YouTuber Sameer MD, who was booked for his investigative video on the Soujanya rape and murder case.

Soujanya, 17, a second-year Pre-University student of the Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College was allegedly raped and murder on 9 October, 2012.

Justice Hemant Chandangoudar granted interim relief to the petitioner by staying the FIR, which was registered at Cowl Bazaar Police Station in Ballari under Section 299 (hurting religious sentiments) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

Sameer had posted a video titled "Dharmasthala Soujanya Case" on his YouTube channel 'Dhootha: Sameer MD', which has garnered over 18 million views.

After 11 years of investigation, a Bengaluru court acquitted the lone accused, Santhosh Rao, of all the charges. *—PTI*

Officer beaten up for refusing docu in Marathi

BELAGAVI, 11 MARCH

A gram panchayat secretary in Karnataka, Nagappa Kodli, was brutally assaulted on Monday evening for refusing to provide official documents in Marathi. The attack, which involved iron rods and sticks, occurred in Sulebhavi village while Kodli was riding his two-wheeler. He reported to the Belagavi rural police that he was confronted by a group led by Vikram Yellurkar, the son of local politician Chetan Patil, who demanded the documents in Marathi. Kodli explained that he could not comply with their demand due to government regulations. Fortunately, nearby farmers intervened and rescued him from the assault.

The police noted that Chetan Patil is the district convenor of the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES), a pro-Maharashtrian organisation, while Yellurkar's mother serves as the president of the Ambewadi gram panchayat.

Kodli has been under fire recently for deploying over 350 workers under Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Scheme, which Patil and Yellurkar opposed. *—Salar News*

DUST CLOUDS IN CITY

Dust clouds from ongoing construction work at City's Cantonment Railway Station are a health hazzard to passersby *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

'Can't use 'POLICE' stickers on pvt cars'

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

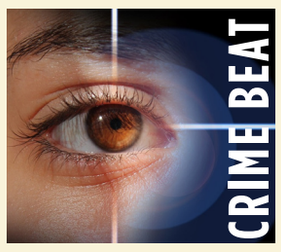
Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda has issued a stern directive to all unit officers, mandating the removal of 'POLICE' stickers from any private vehicles within the city. This move follows growing concerns over security and law enforcement, as the commissioner pointed out that such practices could be exploited by criminals or anti-social elements impersonating police personnel.

"Allowing 'POLICE' stickers on private vehicles poses a significant security threat," Dayananda stated. This announcement echoes a clarification made earlier in the day by Home Minister G Parameshwara during a session in the Legislative Assembly. *—Salar News*

CRIME BEAT

64-yr-old ex-teacher held for jewellery theft

A 64-year-old woman has been arrested by Subramanya Nagar Police for stealing gold and diamond jewellery during an exhibition at a five-star hotel in Bengaluru. The accused, Zahira Fatima, a former teacher from Udayagiri in Mysuru, was found with jewellery valued at Rs 8 lakh. The theft occurred between 17 and 19 January when Zahira visited a jewellery stall, disguised as a customer, and stole a diamond bracelet weighing 11.95 grams and a gold bangle weighing 59.1 grams. The theft went unnoticed until the store manager filed a complaint. Zahira may have been driven to commit the thefts due to financial debts. *—Salar News*



K'taka police arrest one in Rs 33 lakh theft case

HAVERI, 11 MARCH

Haveri Police have successfully resolved a Rs 33 lakh theft case by arresting an accused from Andhra Pradesh. The incident occurred on March 6, when the victim, Santosh, withdrew the large sum from the Union Bank of India and left it in his vehicle while going inside his home. During this brief moment, an interstate gang, having been following him, broke the car window and stole the cash in a matter of 40-50 seconds before fleeing the scene on two motorcycles. Santosh discovered the theft around 5.30pm and promptly contacted the police. *—ANI*

City cops seize 18 phones in mobile theft case

Bengaluru, 11 March

Rajagopalnagar Police have successfully solved a mobile phone robbery case, arresting two suspects and recovering 18 mobile phones and two two-wheelers worth Rs 5,00,000. The suspects confessed to several robberies, and investigations continue to trace the owners of the stolen devices. The incident occurred on the night of 26 February, 2025, when a complainant from Andrahalli was approached by two unidentified individuals. *—ANI*

Madrasa assault: Parents pressured to drop case

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

The parents of a minor girl, who was allegedly assaulted at a madrasa in Hedge Nagar, have filed a fresh complaint claiming that madrasa authorities are pressuring them to withdraw the case against the accused, Mohammed Hassan.

Hassan was arrested by the Kothanur police on 20 February after CCTV footage of the assault went viral, leading to the temporary closure of the madrasa. Following the incident, members of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) inspected the premises.

However, in a recent development, the girl's mother reported to the Yeshwanthpur police station on Monday that two members of the madrasa management had been threatening them to retract the case.

Authorities confirmed that action will be taken based on the findings of the inquiry, with further updates expected as the investigation unfolds. *—Salar News*

KATRINA KAIF VISITS KUKKE

Bollywood actor Katrina Kaif on Tuesday offered prayers at the Kukke Sri Subrahmanya Temple in Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada district. According to temple authorities, Katrina visited the temple with her friends and is reportedly performing the Sarpa Samskara pooja. Katrina will stay in the temple's VIP guest house. *PHOTO: VIDEOGRAB*

AFTER OVERPAYING

Victoria Hospital patients face refund delays

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

Despite Bengaluru's rapid shift to digital transactions, government hospitals like Victoria Hospital continue to struggle with outdated systems, causing significant inconvenience—especially for economically weaker patients.

Although the hospital has introduced QR codes for UPI payments, the lack of an efficient refund mechanism has left many patients waiting for days to reclaim excess payments. Hospital officials say the refund process currently takes between one week and 10 days, leading to considerable distress for those who overpay in haste or confusion.

Hospital officials say the refund process currently takes between one week and 10 days, leading to considerable distress *PHOTO: X*

"In a rush, people often make excess payments—like Rs 4,000 instead of Rs 400. We always advise them to be careful while making transactions," said Jayalakshmi, a cashier at Victoria Hospital.

In just the past two months, at least 15 cases of overpayment have been reported, with refunds still pending. The verification process requires extracting transaction statements, submitting them to the department, and waiting for management approval—leading to lengthy delays.

For patients traveling from distant towns and villages, the situation is even more challenging. "I came from Shivamogga to attend to my ailing mother. Returning for a refund means losing a day's wages and spending on travel," said Avinash, a teacher.

While the hospital claims it is working to streamline the process, many have urged the government to implement a real-time refund system to prevent further inconvenience. *—Salar News*

Woman found hanging from fan at her Mathikere home

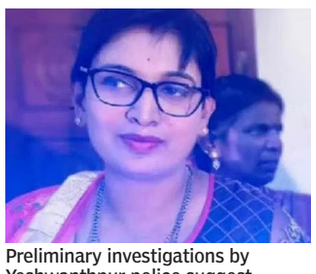
BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

A 42-year-old woman, Manjula, was found dead under mysterious circumstances at her Mathikere residence on Tuesday afternoon.

Sources said that she was a former State General Secretary of BJP Mahila Morcha. Police said she was found hanging from a ceiling fan around 2.30pm, with a death note nearby.

Preliminary investigations by Yeshwanthpur police suggest she had been battling mental distress since her husband's death.

The note cited emotional turmoil and stated she was responsible for her own death. Neighbours, noticing no movement, alerted authorities.



Preliminary investigations by Yeshwanthpur police suggest Manjula had been battling mental distress *PHOTO: SALAR*

Her body was sent to MS Ramaiah Hospital for post-mortem, and investigations are underway.

(Suicide is not the solution. Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support)

—Salar News

AIMPLB to protest against Waqf Bill on 17 March

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) Tuesday announced it will hold a protest against the Waqf (Amendment) Bill on 17 March at Jantar Mantar in the national capital to invoke the conscience of "secular" political parties, including those part of the NDA government. The stir has been postponed in view of Holi, as Parliament may also not meet on that day, the board's spokesperson SQR Ilyas said. The AIMPLB spokesperson said that after careful consideration, the Board has come to the conclusion that the proposed legislation will pave the way for the "usurping" of Waqf properties and it was a "direct attack" on Muslims. *—PTI*

Govt bans AAC & JKIM for 5 yrs over unlawful activities

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

The Central government has banned two Jammu and Kashmir-based groups for five years under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. The two groups are Awami Action Committee (AAC) headed by Umar Farooq and Jammu and Kashmir Ittihadul Muslimeen (JKIM) led by Masroor Abbas Ansari. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said members of the AAC and JKIM have remained involved in supporting terrorist activities and anti-India propaganda for fuelling secessionism in J-K. The outfit is also indulging in unlawful activities that are prejudicial to the integrity, sovereignty and security of the country. Considering all the facts available, the MHA declared both groups outlawed for five years under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

BJP leader in Sambhal injected with poison, dies

SAMBHAL, 11 MARCH

A BJP leader in this Uttar Pradesh district died after three unidentified men allegedly injected a poisonous substance into his body, police said. Gunnaur's Circle Officer Deepak Tiwari said, "Gulfam Singh Yadav, 60, was sitting at his farm in Daftara village under Junawai police station limits on Monday evening when three men arrived on a motorcycle and injected him with a substance before fleeing. Yadav was being taken to Aligarh for treatment but died on the way. So far, no formal complaint has been received from the victim's family. A police team has been deployed to investigate the case," he added. Tiwari said Yadav was associated with the BJP. He had contested an assembly bypoll on a BJP ticket. *—PTI*

India keeps close watch on Afg, talks on with Taliban

UNITED NATIONS, 11 MARCH

India told the UN Security Council that it has discussed with the Taliban regime various issues pertaining to bilateral relations and the "special" people-to-people ties has been the "foundation" of Delhi's present day engagement with the country. India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, said Monday at the UN Security meeting on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) that in the beginning of this year, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi in Dubai. "The two sides discussed various issues pertaining to bilateral relations as well as regional developments. The Afghan side appreciated and thanked India for continued engagement and support," Harish said. *—PTI*

Sitharaman, Gogoi spar in Parl over barbs at PM Modi

Gogoi triggers debate, says PM evades key issues

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman sparred in Lok Sabha on Tuesday over the opposition member's remarks targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Initiating a discussion on the supplementary demands for grants, excess grants and the Manipur budget, Gogoi said the prime minister "disappears" whenever an important issue comes up in the country.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla interjected Gogoi and said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had informed him about his foreign visit and pointed out that previous prime ministers too have undertaken visits abroad during Parliament sessions. Modi is on an official visit to Mauritius.

Gogoi said he has utmost respect for the prime minister, but it was the tendency of the Treasury benches to insult former prime ministers time and again and their utterances were always part of parliamentary record.

At this point, Sitharaman said Gogoi had made some "profound" remarks and

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Budget session PHOTO: PTI

added there were a number of occasions when the prime minister was not allowed to speak in the House.

Gogoi hit back at Sitharaman and asked her to refer to the prime minister's speech in Lok Sabha last month.

Meanwhile, India and the US are planning to negotiate a trade agreement and both countries will focus on increasing market access, reducing import duty and non-tariff barriers, and enhancing supply chain integration, Parliament was informed. Trinamool MP Kalyan Banerjee was engaged in a war of words with treasury bench members in Lok Sabha over stoppage of MNREGA funds for West Bengal. During the Question Hour, Banerjee said the benefits of MNREGA scheme are not being passed on to West Bengal.

Banerjee also attacked Union Minister Giriraj Singh, saying, "you are a central minister, you are behaving like this...who made you minister?" *—PTI*

Bill related to immigration in Lok Sabha

New Delhi, 11 MARCH

A bill seeking to streamline various services related to immigration and foreigners was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday with opposition dubbing it to be violative of constitutional provisions. Minister Nityanand Rai said the Centre has all the rights to bring legislations on the subject. Foreigners are currently governed by the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, and the Foreigners Act, 1946. *—PTI*

'EYESORE, PUBLIC NUISANCE'

Court orders FIR against Kejri over misuse of funds

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

A Delhi court on Tuesday ordered Delhi Police to file an FIR against former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and others in a defacement of public property case.

Additional chief judicial magistrate Neha Mittal said one Shiv Kumar Saxena submitted visual evidence with the date and time indicating the illegal banners bore the names and photos of the accused persons, including Kejriwal.

Aside from Kejriwal, the court ordered the FIR against former MLA Gulab Singh and then Dwarka councilor Nitika Sharma, for installing "large-sized" banners.

The court, taking note of the evidence, said that "hanging a banner board or affixing hoardings" amounted to defacement of property under Section 3 of the Act. It said Section 5 of the Act prescribed an offence under the law to be cognisable. It also said it would be unfair to expect the complainant to gather evidence against the persons responsible and only Delhi Police could carry out a thorough investigation.

Arvind Kejriwal PHOTO: PTI

Saxena in 2019 alleged Kejriwal, Singh and Sharma deliberately misused public money by putting up large-sized hoardings at various places in Dwarka in southwest Delhi.

Meanwhile, The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) questioned BJP over its promise to provide free cooking gas cylinders to women on the occasion of Holi and Diwali. Senior AAP Leader and former Delhi chief minister Atishi said that women in the capital are waiting for the BJP to fulfil its pre-poll promise. *—PTI*

TN govt hypocrite, refusing to implement NEP: Sukanta

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

Union Minister of State for Education Sukanta Majumdar on Tuesday called Tamil Nadu government "hypocrite" and accused it of refusing to implement new National Education Policy 2020 to create a political agenda as elections are approaching in the state.

Speaking to reporters outside Parliament, Majumdar said the claims of any differential treatment with Tamil Nadu are false.

"They (TN government) are doing this only because elections are near in the state. The claims of differential treatment with Tamil Nadu are false. We are advocating for teaching and learning in mother tongue for students till class 5. In Tamil Nadu the mother tongue is Tamil, where is the problem then?"

Sukanta Majumdar PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Majumdar told PTI Videos.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has launched a scathing attack on NEP, labelling it a "destructive Nagpur plan" designed to undermine the state's education system. Stalin's remarks came amidst a heated debate over the NEP's implementation, with the Chief Minister alleging that the policy would have far-reaching and detrimental consequences for education in Tamil Nadu.

Stalin is facing an unusual wave of trolling over his stand against the "Hindi imposition". The BJP seized the moment to highlight what they call DMK's hypocrisy on the three-language policy.

In a related development, Stalin has been engaging with other state leaders to mobilize opposition to the Centre's proposed delimitation of Lok Sabha seats, which he has described as an "unfair exercise". A meeting has been scheduled in Chennai on 22 March, to discuss the issue and formulate a unified response to the Centre's proposals. *—PTI*

Odisha Assembly erupts in scuffle between BJP and Cong; adjourned

BHUBANESWAR, 11 MARCH

Odisha Assembly on Tuesday plunged into chaos when members of the ruling BJP and opposition Congress scuffled in the well of the House leading to adjournment of the proceedings several times.

Tension erupted in the House during Question Hour when senior BJP lawmaker Jaynarayan Mishra rushed towards Congress' Taraprasad Bahinipati, who was standing near Urban Development Minister KC Mohapatra when the minister was replying to a question. The minister was giving the reply amid ruckus by opposition BJD and the Congress members. Earlier, Bahinipati attempted to climb the Speaker's podium in order to stall the proceedings but failed, with Speaker Surama Padhy allowing Question Hour amid the din.

BJD and Congress MLAs protest during the Budget session of Odisha Assembly in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

Thereafter, he approached the minister asking him to stop giving the reply as the opposition members were protesting in the well.

Soon, other members of the treasury bench rushed to the well of the House and scuffled with the Congress members. *—PTI*

I've no control over police, says J&K CM

JAMMU, 11 MARCH

Asserting that the lathi charge on the protesting daily wage employees of the Jal Shakti department should not have happened, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said he does not hold control over the police.

As the House assembled for the day, opposition members highlighted the massive protests by the daily wagers demanding release of wages and regularisation of jobs, and criticised the lathi charge on them. The BJP members staged a walkout as a ruckus erupted, when the BJP and National Conference members engaged in a verbal duel over the matter.

J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah speaks during Budget session of the J&K Assembly in Jammu on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

Intervening, Abdullah said, "You (BJP MLA Vikram Randhawa) have asked a question, please wait for the answer."

"As far as the police's treatment of the protesters is concerned, I would like to remind Randhawa Sahab, who is making a noise about this issue, that unfortunately, neither you nor I have control over the police," he said.

> **We call it Bharat. We call it India. We call it Hindustan. We have three names. Whichever name resonates with you, you can call it that**
>
> —Omar Abdullah, J&K Chief Minister

The Chief Minister further said that instead of creating a ruckus inside the House, it would have been better if the opposition raised the matter a few kilometres from there (referring to the Lieutenant Governor), where the actual control lies. *—PTI*

FIR for attacking ED during raid on Baghel

RAIPUR, 11 MARCH

The Durg Police has filed an FIR into an incident of obstructing and stoning of a vehicle that was part of the ED team that searched the residence of former Chhattisgarh chief minister and senior Congress leader Bhupesh Baghel in a case against his son.

The complaint has been filed at the 'Old Bhilai' police station in the district on Monday night by the driver of the private vehicle. The searches went on for about eight hours during which the ED seized about Rs 30 lakh in cash and some documents, sources said.

The driver said in his complaint to the police that about 15-20 protestors stopped the four-wheeler while it was leaving around 4.30pm from Bhupesh's residence and some people climbed on the bonnet. Someone also hurled a stone that hit the front windshield of the vehicle.

Chaitanya Baghel may be summoned for questioning in the case at the ED office in Raipur. *— PTI*

IN YOGI LAND

BJP leader asks Muslim men to wear 'tarpaulin hijabs' on Holi

ALIGARH, 11 MARCH

In controversial comments, BJP leader Raghuraj Singh has asked Muslim men to wear hijabs made of tarpaulin to avoid any inconvenience during Holi celebrations on Friday. The festival of Holi this year coincides with the second Friday of the month of Ramzan.

Singh, who is chairman of the high-power advisory committee of the labour and employment ministry in Uttar Pradesh, and enjoys minister of state equivalent rank, said, "The administration is on alert in view of Holi celebrations and for the 'Juma namaz' (Friday prayers) but some people have their objections".

"To those people, I would request that like the women there (apparently referring to Muslim women) wear hijab, and mosques are covered using tarpaulin, they can make a hijab of tarpaulin for themselves, and can move (from one place to another). They will not face any inconvenience, and will be able to offer namaz easily," he said.

Raghuraj Singh PHOTO: PTI

The controversial remarks comes days after a circle officer in Sambhal kicked up a row by commenting that those who feel uncomfortable with Holi colours should stay indoors, as the festival comes only once a year, whereas Juma namaz takes place 52 times in a year.

Ahead of the festival, many mosques in Uttar Pradesh have shifted the Friday prayer timings on Holi.

Eat vegetarian during Holi, says chief of Nabadwip Municipality.

The chairman of the Nabadwip municipal body in West Bengal's Nadia has appealed to residents of the town to consume vegetarian food for three days during Holi, popularly known as 'Dol Utsav' here.

Maintaining that tourists and devotees from all over the world visit Nabadwip, the birthplace of Vaishnava saint and an important figure of the Bhakti movement, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the municipal chairman Biman Kumar Saha urged all concerned to ensure that non-vegetarian food is not sold or cooked during the festival. *—PTI*

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam chief Vijay arrives at an Iftar organised by the party in Chennai PHOTO: PTI

Plaint filed against Vijay for 'insulting Muslims' at Iftar

CHENNAI, 11 MARCH

Tamil actor Vijay is facing a police complaint for allegedly "insulting Muslims" at an Iftar gathering he hosted in Chennai on Friday. According to a report, the Tamil Nadu Sunnat Jamath has lodged a complaint at the Chennai Police Commissioner's office, raising concerns over the event's conduct.

Tamil Nadu Sunnat Jamath treasurer Syed Kous addressed the media, stating that the Iftar was organized in a manner that "hurt sentiments." He alleged that individuals with no connection to fasting or Iftar, including "drunkards and rowdies," were present, which he claimed was disrespectful to the Muslim community.

Syed accused Vijay of failing to express regret over the alleged mismanagement of the event. He also criticized the presence of the actor's "foreign guards," claiming they mistreated attendees. "They treated people like cows," he alleged. *—PTI*

EC moots talks to improve electoral processes

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has extended an invitation to all National and State political parties to engage in a discussion aimed at strengthening the electoral process. This move comes amidst allegations of electoral roll manipulation.

In a statement, the ECI revealed that it has solicited suggestions from parties by 30 April to address any unresolved issues at the level of electoral registration officers, district election officers, and chief electoral officers. The Commission has also proposed an interaction with party presidents and senior members to further bolster electoral processes in accordance with established law.

This development follows instructions from CEC Gyanesh Kumar to CEOs, DEOs, and EROs to maintain regular communication with parties and resolve suggestions within the existing legal framework. *—PTI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Guns N' Roses to return to India after 13 years

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

Legendary rock band Guns N' Roses is returning to India after a hiatus of 13 years with a live concert in Mumbai. The American group will be on stage with their full squad Axl Rose (vocals, piano), Duff McKagan (bass) and Slash (lead guitar) at the concert on 17 May at the Mahalaxmi Race Course. Guns N' Roses, known for 1980s chartbusters like 'Sweet Child O' Mine', 'November Rain', 'Paradise City', 'Knockin' on Heaven's Door' and 'Don't Cry', last performed in India in 2012. The band is arriving as part of their Asia tour with iconic hits. The sale of tickets for the tour will go live starting on 19 March at 4 pm local time on BookMyShow. *—PTI*

INDIA HAS 13 OF WORLD'S 20 MOST POLLUTED CITIES

Meghalaya's Byrnihat worst hit; Delhi most choking capital

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Thirteen of the world's 20 most polluted cities are in India, with Byrnihat in Meghalaya topping the list, according to a new report published on Tuesday.

The World Air Quality Report 2024 by Swiss air quality technology company IQAir said Delhi remains the most polluted capital city globally, while India ranked as the world's fifth most polluted country in 2024, marking an improvement from its third rank in 2023.

Four cities in neighbouring Pakistan and one in China are among the world's top 20 polluted cities.

The report said India saw a 7 per cent decline in Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 concentrations in 2024, averaging 50.6 micrograms per cubic metre, compared to 54.4 mcg/ cubic metre in 2023. However, air pollution in Delhi has worsened, with the annual average PM2.5 concentration rising from 102.4 mcg/cubic metre in 2023 to 108.3 mcg/cubic metre in 2024.

PM2.5 refers to tiny air pollution particles smaller than 2.5 microns, which can enter the lungs and bloodstream, leading to breathing problems, heart disease and even cancer.

The Indian cities in the list of world's top 20 most polluted cities are Byrnihat, Delhi, Punjab's Mullanpur, Faridabad, Loni, Gurugram, Ganganagar, Greater Noida, Bhiwadi, Muzaffarnagar, Hanumangarh and Noida.

Overall, 35 per cent of the Indian cities reported annual PM2.5 levels exceeding 10 times the World Health Organization (WHO) limit of 5 micrograms per cubic metre, the report said.

The high level of pollution in Byrnihat, a town on the Meghalaya-Assam border, is due to emissions from local factories, including distilleries, iron and steel plants.

In Delhi, pollution worsens in winter when unfavourable meteorological conditions, combined with vehicular emissions, paddy-straw burning, firecrackers and other local pollution sources, make the air quality hazardous.

Former WHO chief scientist and health ministry advisor Soumya Swaminathan suggested switching to biomass cylinders and strict enforcement of emission laws.

Avinash Chanchal, deputy programme director, Greenpeace South Asia, accused the Governments of not doing enough to expand public transport and decrease vehicular pollution. "Numerous studies have identified emissions from road transport as one of the major contributors. However, the government has failed to strengthen the public transport system.

Vivek Agarwal, global policy expert and country director, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, said despite numerous interventions, pollution in cities like Delhi remains intractable due to siloed regulatory environment, poor data collection and "political short-termism". *—PTI*

SC to states: Don't delay consumer body members' pay

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

PHOTO: PIXABAY

The Supreme Court has directed all state governments to immediately pay the salary and perquisites of the chairpersons and members of the state and district consumer redressal bodies as per existing rules.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and N Kotiswar Singh also directed the Centre to take a call on amending the Consumer Protection (Salary, allowances and conditions of service of President and Members of the State Commission and District Commission) Model Rules, 2020.

"We direct all the state governments to ensure that without prejudice to various contentions raised in this group of cases, salary and perquisites as per existing state rules shall be immediately paid to the chairpersons/members," the bench said.

In case there was no decision from the Government of India on the prospective amendment, the court said, it would 'consider exercising power under Article 142 of the constitution'.

The top court in the March 5 order said, "In the event compliance is not made by some of the state governments, the parties concerned are free to hand over a note to that effect to the learned amicus curiae so that the court can pass an appropriate order."

The bench was hearing a plea related to the salaries and service conditions of the members of consumer fora. *—PTI*

UP Woman, sons kill daughter's lover, his mother

KAUSHAMBI, 11 MARCH

A woman, with the help of her two sons, killed a man in Kajoo village of Uttar Pradesh on suspicion that the latter was in a relationship with her daughter, police said on Tuesday. The victim's mother was also killed in the attack. Police said Shanti Devi, 50, and her two sons Shani and Shravan, both in their mid-20s, attacked Sarvjeet Diwakar, 22 and his mother Sangeeta, 49, in their house on Monday night with an axe. Police reached the spot and admitted the injured to the district hospital, where both died during treatment. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination. While Shravan has been detained, Devi and Shani are absconding, said Additional Superintendent of Police Rajesh Kumar Singh. *—PTI*

Man arrested for abetting suicide in Maharashtra

JALNA, 11 MARCH

A self-styled godman, who was arrested for harassing a man and abetting his suicide in Maharashtra's Jalna, allegedly wanted the victim to hand over his five-year-old daughter for an occult ritual, police said on Tuesday. The Jalna police arrested the accused, Ganesh Lokhande, 45, on 6 March in connection with the death of Dnyaneshwar Aher, 30, a resident of Walsa Wadla village in Bhokardan tehsil, Inspector Kiran Bidve said. He said Aher hanged himself from a tree on 3 March. The official said a probe has revealed that the accused was pressuring Aher to hand over his daughter for an occult ritual, which he planned to perform to unearth a hidden treasure. Police have booked Lokhande under Anti-Superstition and Black Magic Act. *—PTI*

Youth shot dead in broad daylight in Uttar Pradesh

LAKHIMPUR KHERI, 11 MARCH

A 20-year-old man was chased down and shot dead by around five assailants on a busy road near a police outpost in Mishrana, a police official said on Tuesday. The youth, identified as Amogh Seth, a resident of Seth Colony in Hathipur, was rushed to a hospital, but did not survive. A book store employee named Aditya Kashyap was also injured when the attackers opened fire as Seth tried to hide inside the shop, police said. His condition is said to be out of danger. Police said the assailants fled the spot on two bikes after the incident, which happened on Monday evening. The police have registered a case based on a complaint filed by Bharat Seth, the father of the deceased. *—PTI*

Gangster killed in associates' bid to free him from Jharkhand police

RANCHI/MEDININAGAR, 11 MARCH

Gangster Aman Sao was killed in an encounter when members of his gang tried to free him from police custody in Jharkhand's Palamu district on Tuesday, officials said.

The incident took place a day after state Director General of Police Anurag Gupta said most crime plots in Jharkhand are being hatched inside jails and executed with the help of criminal gangs.

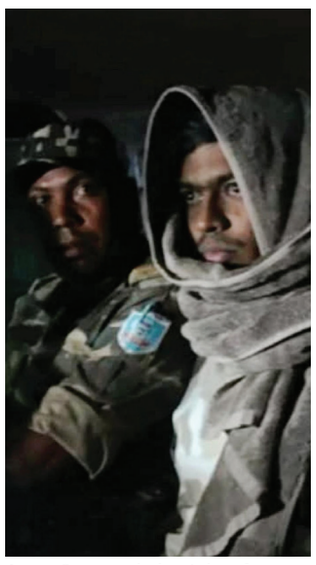
"The shootout happened on Tuesday morning when the gangster, accused in over 150 cases and convicted in some cases, was being brought to Ranchi from Raipur jail in neighbouring Chhattisgarh when member of Sao's gang allegedly attacked the vehicle in which he was being brought, resulting in a gunfight in which Sao was killed and another police personnel was injured," Medininagar Sub-divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Manibhushan Prasad said. The injured police personnel is receiving medical treatment.

Police said vehicular movement between Chainpur and Ramgarh has been halted.

An ambulance has been sent to pick up the body. After completing the necessary procedures, the body will be brought to MR Medical College and Hospital for post-mortem examination.

The issue was also raised in the Jharkhand Assembly, with JD(U) legislator Saryu Roy seeking clarity on the alleged encounter of the gangster.

Gupta said an FIR has been lodged against 30 members of the Aman Sao gang on Sunday expressing hoping they will be arrested soon. *—PTI*



Aman Sao was being taken from Raipur jail to Ranchi when his gang tried to free him **PHOTO: PTI**

Human skeleton found in suitcase in Kerala town

KOLLAM, 11 MARCH

Police on Tuesday launched an investigation after a human skeleton was discovered inside a suitcase in a plot adjacent to a church cemetery in this south Kerala district.

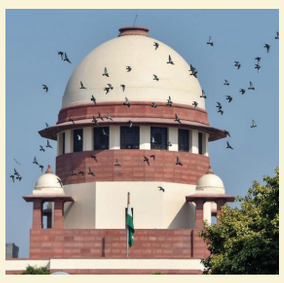
The Kollam East police said that the age of the deceased has not yet been determined and it will be known only after a scientific examination. Officers suspect that the suitcase was thrown from the road into the cemetery area.

The remains were discovered in an overgrown area when some persons arrived there to carry out maintenance work.

They immediately informed the police. *—PTI*

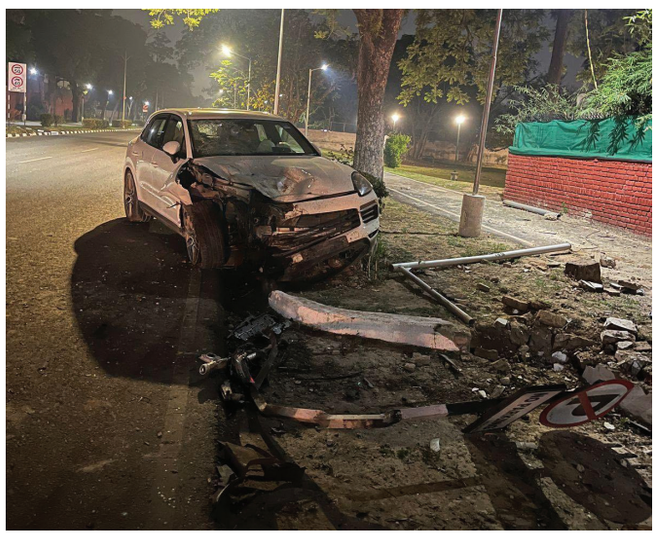
SC NOTICE TO CENTRE FOR DISABLED-FRIENDLY PRISONS

New Delhi, 11 March



The Supreme Court has sought a response from the Centre on a plea seeking adequate facilities for disabled prisoners in jails, and implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in prisons across the country.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta issued notice to the Union of India and others on a plea filed by activist Sathyan Naravoor contending that even after more than eight years since the enactment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, most state prison manuals do not include the mandatory provisions for ramps and other essential accessibility measures and prisoners with disabilities often depend on others for assistance with their daily tasks. Citing instances of professor G N Saibaba and activist Stan Swamy to highlight the 'severe neglect' of disabled prisoners, the plea said necessary provisions should be incorporated in the existing Prisons Act to address the special needs of disabled inmates. *—PTI*



One person died, and two young women were severely injured as speeding Porsche Cayenne hit 2 two-wheelers in Sector 4, Chandigarh. **PHOTO: X**

Speeding Porsche claims life in C'garh; 2 injured

CHANDIGARH, 11 MARCH

A 24-year-old man was killed on the spot and two women were injured allegedly after a Porsche car hit two scooters here, police said on Tuesday.

The incident happened near a petrol pump in Sector 4 at around 8 am on Monday, they said, adding that the deceased has been identified as Ankit, a resident of Nayagaon area.

Police said the impact of the collision was so powerful that one of the two-wheelers was completely destroyed and the front portion of the luxury car, including its front wheel, was damaged. The accident also severed Ankit's leg and injured the legs of the women.

A police officer said the driver, who was alone in the vehicle when the accident happened, was arrested.

A case has been registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, he added. *—PTI*

Telangana tunnel collapse: Robots join search

NAGARKURNOOL, 11 MARCH

Robots on Tuesday joined the operation to locate the seven persons who remain trapped inside the partially collapsed Srisailam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel here since 22 February. The team of a Hyderabad-based robotics company along with a robot went inside the tunnel Tuesday morning. As many as 110 rescue personnel also went into the tunnel amidst challenges posed by water and slush.

State irrigation minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy on 8 March said the government would spend Rs four crores to undertake the operation by utilizing the services of robot experts of a Hyderabad-based private company.

Calling the incident, a 'national disaster' he said rescue teams are utilising the latest global technology to navigate difficult conditions inside the tunnel.

The search operations have been continuing with teams from NDRF, state-run miner Singareni Collieries, rat miners and others working at specific spots indicated by cadaver dogs and radar survey to locate the seven persons guided by the Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) surveys conducted by the scientists of National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) in Hyderabad are focusing efforts at suspected locations also with help of Human Remains Detection Dogs (HRDD) of Kerala police.

Two days ago, the rescue personnel recovered the dead body of Gurpreet Singh, a Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) operator who worked for a foreign company involved in tunnel works. The Telangana government expressing condolences has provided an ex-gratia of Rs 25 lakh to his family. *—PTI*

A dog squad takes part in the rescue operation for workers trapped inside a partially collapsed Srisailam Left Bank Canal project tunnel in Nagarkurnool, Telangana **PHOTO: PTI**

ONION AUCTION RESUMES AFTER PROTEST

NASHIK, 11 MARCH

Onion auctions at Lasalgaon APMC in Maharashtra's Nashik began on Tuesday, a day after farmers halted the process for some time and staged a protest by climbing atop a water tank against the drop in prices of the key kitchen staple.

The protesters on Monday demanded that the 20 per cent export duty on onions be removed, claiming it as the reason for the drop in prices at the Agriculture Produce Market Committee in Lasalgaon, Asia's biggest wholesale onion market.

As many as 15 farmers climbed atop a water tank, which also stalled its auctions on Monday.

"There is a drop of Rs 300-500 in the average prices of both red and summer crop of onions. The 20 per cent export duty on onions must be removed," one of the protesters said.

The farmers called off the protest after Agriculture Minister Manikrao Kokate assured to address their concerns. *—PTI*

STUDENTS BOOKED

JU tense over 'Free Kashmir & Palestine' graffiti, cops in mufti

KOLKATA, 11 MARCH

"Azad Kashmir" and "Free Palestine" graffiti were spotted on the Jadavpur University (JU) campus, triggering a row. The alleged entry of 'plainclothes police personnel' on the university campus on Monday also did not go down well with a section of the students and teachers.

Protests were being held for the past few days at JU where two students were injured after the car of state Education Minister Bratya Basu and another accompanying vehicle allegedly grazed past them during a Left protest on the campus on 1 March.

An FIR has been lodged against Basu, and professor and TMC leader Om Prakash Mishra in connection with the violence. Graffiti in black proclaiming 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Free Palestine' were seen on a wall of the university on Monday, but it was not known who or which organisation was behind it.

JU's Trinamool Chhatra Parishad unit president Kishalay Roy alleged some ultra-Left student outfits were behind it. SFI's JU unit leader Abhinaba Basu said, "We don't support secessionist views though we are against the repression of minorities in BJP-ruled states."

In another development, activists of SFI and AIDSO along with leading professor unions, claimed that around 30 police personnel in plainclothes entered the campus around 1pm on Monday shortly after Mishra arrived and stayed till the afternoon hours when the classes were over.

SFI leader Souryadipto Roy said students got agitated after spotting plainclothes policemen on the campus, shortly after Mishra entered, and raised slogans demanding the university be freed from intimidation by ruling TMC and the state administration.

JUTA general secretary PP Roy said, "We took up the issue (of police inside the campus) with university authorities and also persuaded the agitating students not to escalate the issue." *—Agencies*

Kolkata Police have booked members of students group PDSF for putting up Azad Kashmir graffiti inside Jadavpur University campus **PHOTO: PTI**

HOLI RUSH

Passengers aboard an overcrowded train amid rush ahead of the Holi festival, in Patna, on Tuesday
PHOTO: PTI

India second largest arms importer after Ukraine

Ukraine, which is embroiled in a prolonged conflict with Russia, was the world's largest importer of major arms during 2020-24, when its imports increased nearly 100 times as compared to the figures for 2015-19, a new global report said.

India was the world's second largest arms importer during the period under review, with its imports reflecting "perceived threats from both China and Pakistan".

However, India's imports decreased by 9.3 per cent between 2015-19 and 2020-24, according to a statement by independent global think-tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), which published the report.

"European arms imports overall grew by 155 per cent between the same periods, as states responded to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the uncertainty over the future of US foreign policy," it said.

The US further increased its share of global arms exports to 43 per cent, while Russia's exports fell by 64 per cent, as per the new data on international arms transfers published by SIPRI on Monday.

The Ukraine-Russia conflict began in February 2022 and efforts are currently being made by certain quarters to resolve it and bring lasting peace in the region.

"Ukraine became the world's largest importer of major arms in the period 2020-24, with its imports increasing nearly 100 times as compared to 2015-19," SIPRI said in the statement.

The overall volume of arms transfers globally remained at roughly the same level as in 2015–19 and 2010–14 (but was 18 per cent higher than in 2005–2009), as increasing imports in Europe and the Americas were offset by decreases in other regions.

"The top 10 arms exporters in 2020–24 were the same as those in 2015–19, but Russia (accounting for 7.8 per cent of global arms exports) fell to third place behind France (9.6 per cent), while Italy (4.8 per cent) jumped from 10th to sixth place," the statement said.

India was world's second largest arms importer with its imports reflecting "perceived threats from both China and Pakistan
PHOTO: PTI

Russia delivered major arms to 33 states in 2020-24. Two thirds of Russian arms exports went to three nations -- India (38 per cent), China (17 per cent) and Kazakhstan (11 per cent), as per SIPRI data.

"France became the world's second largest arms supplier in 2020-24, delivering arms to 65 states. France's exports of major arms to other European states almost trebled between 2015-19 and 2020-24 (+187 per cent). This was mainly due to deliveries of combat aircraft to Greece and Croatia, and arms supplies to Ukraine after Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022," it said.

India received by far the "largest share" of French arms exports (28 per cent) -- almost twice the share that went to all European recipients combined (15 per cent).

The second largest recipient of major arms from France was Qatar (9.7 per cent of French arms exports), the think-tank said.

China was the fourth largest exporter of arms in 2020-24, with 5.9 per cent of global arms exports.

Despite China's efforts to increase its arms exports, many large importers do not buy Chinese arms for "political reasons", the statement noted.

The largest share of Indian arms imports (36 per cent) came from Russia, a significantly smaller share than in 2015-19 (55 per cent) and 2010-14 (72 per cent), it said.

"Arms imports by Pakistan grew by 61 per cent between 2015-19 and 2020-24. China became even more dominant as its supplier, accounting for 81 per cent of Pakistan's arms imports in 2020-24, compared to 74 per cent in 2015-19," SIPRI said.

With the sharp drop in China's arms imports, and marked decreases in imports by Taiwan (-27 per cent) and South Korea (-24 per cent), arms imports by East Asian states shrank by 22 per cent between 2015-19 and 2020-24. Japan (+93 per cent) was the only East Asian state that saw an increase in its arms imports, the think-tank added.

SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.

Arms imports by the European NATO members more than doubled between 2015–19 and 2020–24 (+105 per cent). The US supplied 64 per cent of these arms, a substantially larger share than in 2015–19 (52 per cent).

The other main suppliers were France and South Korea (accounting for 6.5 per cent each), Germany (4.7 per cent) and Israel (3.9 per cent).

Arms exports by the US increased by 21 per cent between 2015–19 and 2020–24, and its share of global arms exports grew from 35 per cent to 43 per cent. The US supplied major arms to 107 states in 2020–24, SIPRI said in the statement.

Four states in Asia and Oceania ranked among the 10 largest arms importers globally in 2020–24 -- India, Pakistan, Japan and Australia. *—PTI*

SALAR ساڈا

Musk calls social security 'fraud-ridden', eyes cuts

Elon Musk pushed debunked theories about social security on Monday while describing federal benefit programs as rife with fraud, suggesting they will be a primary target in his crusade to reduce government spending.

The billionaire entrepreneur, who is advising President Donald Trump, suggested that $500 billion to $700 billion in waste needed to be cut.

"Most of the federal spending is entitlements," Musk told the Fox Business Network. "That's the big one to eliminate."

The comments on the popular program and other benefits provided to Americans could rattle politicians on both sides of the aisle as Musk works to downsize the federal government, especially as he already faces blowback for his chainsaw-wielding approach to laying off workers and slashing programs.

Musk's estimate for the level of fraud in entitlements far outpaces figures from watchdogs like Social Security's inspector general, who previously said there was $71.8 billion in improper payments from fiscal years 2015 through 2022. That's less than 1% of benefits paid out during that time period.

Musk also said there were "20 million people who are definitely dead marked as alive in the Social Security database." However, the leader of the agency has rejected claims about widespread payments to dead people.

"These individuals are not necessarily receiving benefits," said Lee Dudek, Social Security's acting commissioner.

The interview with Fox Business was a reminder of Musk's deep skepticism and even hostility toward the program, which provides monthly benefits to retirees and some children. Trump has promised to defend Social Security from cuts, but Musk has described it as "the biggest Ponzi scheme of all time," and the administration is shutting down some of the agency's offices.

Musk said Monday that federal entitlements are "a mechanism by which the Democrats attract and retain illegal immigrants by essentially paying them to come here and then turning them into voters." The allegation echoed the "great replacement" theory, which claims that politicians are trying to expand their power by reshaping the country's racial demographics.

The interview was conducted in the White House complex by Larry Kudlow, who served as an economic adviser to Trump during his first term. During the conversation, Musk seemed to acknowledge the unusual nature of his role in the administration.

"Frankly, I can't believe I'm here doing this," Musk said. "It's kind of bizarre."

Musk is the world's richest person and still runs his private enterprises as he advises the president on ways to overhaul the federal government.

He also thanked Trump for his confidence, saying, "Without the president's support, we couldn't make any progress here."

Trump has publicly backed Musk and given him extraordinary influence over the federal government. However, the Republican president has indicated a shift in approach, saying that Musk's team would use a "scalpel" rather than a "hatchet."

Musk has not often spoken publicly since joining the administration, preferring instead to present a stream of consciousness on X, his social media platform. On Monday, he accused Democrats of attacking Tesla dealerships; bragged about X being "the top source for news on Earth;" and accused Arizona Democratic Sen. Mark Kelly, a former fighter pilot and astronaut, of being a traitor for visiting Ukraine over the weekend.

Republicans have spent decades trying to reduce the size and scope of the federal government, and many have cheered Musk's work.

But there are signs of backlash and skepticism. Some Republicans have even boasted of blocking budget cuts.

Oklahoma Rep. Tom Cole issued a statement saying three federal offices in his state — the National Weather Center in Norman, the Social Security Administration Office in Lawton and the Indian Health Services Office in Oklahoma City — would stay open.

About half of Americans said it's "a bad thing" that Trump has given Musk a prominent role in his administration, according to a mid-February CNN/SSRS poll. Only a third saw it as "a good thing."

Another mid-February survey by The Washington Post and Ipsos found that Americans were divided on whether Musk is mainly cutting wasteful spending or necessary programs, with about a third falling into each camp. Another quarter said they weren't sure. *—PTI*

Tesla CEO Elon Musk said there were 20 million people who are definitely dead marked as alive in the Social Security database
PHOTO: PTI

LETTERS write to us at salar@salar.news

5 years after pandemic, world is poorly prepared for another one

In Europe ten people died from measles in 2024, and the US has had several major outbreaks. Bird flu has affected dairy herds in 17 US states from North Carolina to California and has just been reported in cats.

So far, it is reluctant to spread among people, although people can both get it and give it to animals.

Between 500 and 1,000 people globally are now dying every week from Covid.

This winter, healthcare in much of the developed world has been hit by a combination of flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and Covid, leading to rising hospital admissions and deaths. We don't have real control of any of these diseases.

In the last 60 years there have been four pandemics – a million dead from flu in 1968-69; 774 people dead from Sars-1 in 2002; 7 million dead from Covid since 2021; 280 dead from mpox since 2022.

I'm not sure we are more ready for the next pandemic.

We are not controlling the diseases we can control. There have been cases of polio in children in Gaza and in young adults in New York. This is a disease that was nearly eliminated from the world.

Children are hospitalised with measles every day in wealthy countries. Many are very ill, some are left with brain damage and some die. Measles also came close to extinction but came back as vaccination rates fell.

Cotton Mather (a Puritan cleric) and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu introduced smallpox variolation (an early, crude form of vaccination) to the west in 1721.

The practice attracted controversy because of its danger and the immorality of deliberately infecting people.

Anti-vaccination arguments have continued to run ahead of the evidence of benefit ever since. Partly as a result, we have not yet controlled measles or polio.

There are vaccine side-effects, but these are much rarer and much less serious than those from the diseases. Vaccine safety is closely monitored and for good reasons – vaccines are given to people who are not ill.

Other simple measures were described by US Supreme Court justice Samuel Alito in 2020 as "previously unimaginable restrictions on individual liberty".

There were cases during the peak of the Covid pandemic, where people who wore masks in public were harassed.

Lockdowns and other restrictions on mobility were much more intrusive, but there is clear evidence that both worked and people and economies benefited as a result.

Between 500 and 1,000 people globally are now dying every week from Covid
PHOTO: ANI

Public health measures did control Sars-1, mainly because governments, public health teams and doctors got on top of it very quickly. They used the same approaches that have been used to control other severe outbreaks, including strong restrictions on movement.

Neither mpox nor Covid was controlled. In both cases, global responses were late, underfunded and slow and became the target of political attacks. In the case of mpox, it was initially thought, wrongly, only to affect gay men, and hence of limited significance to others. As a result, not enough was done to halt its spread early in the outbreak.

Many unscrupulous people took advantage of the Covid pandemic, selling useless remedies for the condition, such as bleach, hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin.

There were also campaigns promoting conspiracy theories about the origin of the virus, such as suggesting a deliberate release of an engineered virus, the purposes of the public health measures and the effects of the vaccine.

This made it very hard to deliver serious public health messages and interventions, especially to marginalised groups such as immigrants, poorer people or people with literacy challenges.

Experts are planning for pandemic bird flu, which may happen, but I fear that the next big one will be a virus we have yet to meet. It is critical that we have flexible plans to deal with something besides flu. Unfortunately, a combination of war and toxic politics is reducing our ability to develop and deliver these plans.

To deliver anything effectively, we need to strengthen global public health, including the World Health Organization and the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, which are both under severe threat to their future funding, as the US shrinks and rearranges its own agencies, and with Argentina's plans to leave WHO.

There are grounds for hope. One remarkable outcome of the Covid pandemic was the vaccines.

Most people in public health and vaccine studies thought it would be three years, at best, before a vaccine became available. It will be crucial to maintain the research base and the tools for fairer mass production of new vaccines for whatever happens next.

Two innovative UK studies – Recover and React – also showed a way forward for future pandemics. Recover provided a frame for doing quick drug trials on sick people, including finding that a cheap, safe medicine called dexamethasone worked to treat severe Covid, and provides a model for future clinical care for new infections.

React monitored the spread of the disease and its effects on UK communities. We need to maintain this capacity for smart, focused and timely innovation so we can quickly respond to whatever nature throws at us.

Most of all, we need politicians who will lead by example, giving clear messages about vaccines and other public health measures. We need a global understanding that if I have an infectious disease, that puts you and your family or country at risk. The virus does not care where you were born, what you believe in, or your political views.

In brief, we have the tools, the skills and the people to respond effectively to another pandemic. The outcomes of Covid and mpox were poor. Unless we improve delivery and leadership, we will fail to control the next pandemic too.

If we look at ourselves as a virus sees us, nothing more than tools for making more viruses, perhaps we can learn a bit of humility and get ready, together, for the next one. *—The Conversation*

PHOTO: X

Pope Francis out of immediate danger, say doctors

ROME, 11 MARCH

Pope Francis woke up on Tuesday to good news from his doctors. They upgraded his prognosis and said he was no longer in imminent danger of death as a result of the double pneumonia that has kept him hospitalised for nearly a month in the longest and gravest threat to his 12-year papacy. The 88-year-old pope isn't out of the woods yet, however. Doctors are still cautious and have decided to keep him hospitalised for several more days to receive treatment, not to mention a period of rehabilitation he will likely need. But the doctors said he remains stable and has consolidated improvements in recent days, according to blood tests and his good response to treatment. *—PTI*

Greenland votes amid Trump's takeover threat

NUUK, 11 MARCH

Greenland held early parliamentary elections on Tuesday under close watch, as US President Donald Trump has made clear he wants to take control of the region that occupies a strategic North Atlantic location and contains rare earth minerals key to driving the global economy. This self-governing region of Denmark is home to 56,000 people, most from Indigenous Inuit backgrounds. It has been on a path toward independence since at least 2009. Now, Greenlanders are debating the best way to ensure they control their future. Opinion polls show most Greenlanders favour independence. Most say they do not dislike Americans, but show no sign of wanting to become Americans. Even some of Trump's biggest fans cling to the principle that they should control their destiny. *—PTI*

Militant attack kills six in Somalia hotel

MOGADISHU, 11 MARCH

A car bomb exploded on Tuesday at a hotel in the central Somali city of Beledweyne in a militant attack that killed at least six people, including two prominent traditional elders, according to witnesses. The explosion targeted the Cairo Hotel, which houses traditional elders and military officers currently involved in coordinating the government's offensive against the militant group al-Shabab. The blast triggered intense gunfire as attackers stormed the hotel, engaging security forces. Footage shared on social media showed thick plumes of black smoke rising above the hotel, with significant destruction to the building. No group immediately claimed responsibility. *—PTI*

Fukushima plant's workers exposed to radiation, stress

OKUMA, 11 MARCH

The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant's radiation levels have significantly dropped since the cataclysmic meltdown 14 years ago on Tuesday. As workers remove melted fuel debris from the reactors in a monumental nuclear cleanup effort that could take more than a century, they are facing both huge amounts of psychological stress and dangerous levels of radiation. Akira Ono, chief decommissioning officer at the Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, which manages the plant, says even the tiny sample gives officials a lot of information about the melted fuel. More samples are needed, however, to make the work smoother when bigger efforts to remove the debris begin in the 2030s. A second sample-retrieval mission at the No. 2 reactor is expected in coming weeks. *—PTI*

Russia shoots down 337 Ukrainian drones

Overnight attacks come ahead of Ukraine–US talks in Saudi on ending the three-year war

A photo released by Moscow Region Governor Andrei Vorobyev's official Telegram channel shows the site outside Moscow, where one of the Ukrainian drones fell on Monday night *PHOTO: PTI*

MOSCOW, 11 MARCH

The Russian military said its air defences shot down 337 Ukrainian drones over 10 Russian regions overnight in what appears to be the biggest Ukrainian drone attack on Russia in three years, hours before key Ukraine-US talks were to start on Tuesday.

The attack, which killed one person and wounded several, came as a Ukrainian delegation was to meet with America's top diplomat in Saudi Arabia about ending the three-year war with Russia.

There was no immediate comment from Ukrainian officials on the attack.

The talks in Saudi Arabia reflect a new diplomatic push after an unprecedented argument erupted during President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's 28 February visit to the White House.

Most of the drones – 126 of them – were shot down over the Kursk region across the border from Ukraine, parts of which Kyiv's forces control, and 91 were shot down over the Moscow region, according to a statement by Russia's Defence Ministry.

An apartment building which was hit by a downed Ukrainian drone on Monday night in Sapronovo village outside Mocow *PHOTO: PTI*

Other regions listed in the statement included Belgorod, Bryansk and Voronezh on the border with Ukraine and those deeper inside Russia, such as Kaluga, Lipetsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Oryol and Ryazan.

In the Saudi city of Jeddah, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and his delegation including national security adviser Mike Waltz were preparing to meet Zelenskyy's team. Ukraine is expected to propose a ceasefire covering the Black Sea and long-range missile strikes, as well as the release of prisoners, according to two senior Ukrainian officials.

The officials also said Kyiv is ready to sign an agreement with the United States on access to Ukraine's rare earth minerals – a deal that US President Donald Trump is keen to secure.

Rubio, however, said the rare earths and critical minerals deal was not a precondition for the United States to move ahead with discussions with either Ukraine or the Russians. *—PTI*

US denies entry, sends back Pakistani diplomat

ISLAMABAD, 11 MARCH

The US authorities denied entry to Pakistan's ambassador to Turkmenistan and deported him from Los Angeles, a media report said on Tuesday.

Ambassador KK Wagan, who holds a valid US visa and all necessary travel documents, was stopped at Los Angeles airport by US immigration authorities, The News quoted diplomatic sources as saying.

"Ambassador KK Wagan was deported from the US. He had an immigration objection which led to his deportation," a senior foreign ministry official said.

The officials forced him to return to his last port of departure, raising concerns about diplomatic protocol and the nature of the decision.

Foreign Office confirmed the envoy had gone to the US on a private visit. It said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was looking into the matter and an investigation was underway.

The Foreign Office also advised avoiding any speculation in the matter.

Earlier, sources said the US immigration system flagged Wagan over "controversial visa references", leading to his immediate deportation. It remains unclear what specific concerns triggered this response from American authorities.

KK Wagan, a seasoned diplomat, was stopped at Los Angeles airport *PHOTO: X*

- The US immigration authorities forced him to return to his last port of departure, raising concerns about diplomatic protocol and the nature of the decision.

Wagan is a seasoned diplomat with extensive experience in Pakistan's foreign service. Over the years, he has held several key assignments, including as deputy consul general at the Consulate General of Pakistan in Los Angeles. Wagan is likely to be called back to Islamabad to explain his position, sources said. *—PTI*

Trump warns 'pro-terrorist' activists

WASHINGTON, 11 MARCH

US President Donald Trump on Monday said the arrest of Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil, who helped lead Columbia University's pro-Palestinian protests last year, was the "first arrest of many to come".

"We know there are more students at Columbia and other universities across the country who have engaged in pro-terrorist, anti-Semitic, anti-American activity, and the Trump Administration will not tolerate it," Trump posted on Truth Social.

"Many are not students, they are paid agitators. We will find, apprehend, and deport these terrorist sympathizers from our country – never to return again. If you support terrorism, including the slaughtering of innocent men, women, and children, your presence is contrary to our national and foreign policy interests, and you are not welcome here. We expect every one of America's Colleges and Universities to comply," he wrote.

The White House amplified Trump's comments in a post on X, reading, "Shalom, Mahmoud", using a Hebrew word for goodbye.

Trump's remarks come as over the weekend federal immigration authorities arrested Mahmoud Khalil, a permanent US resident with a green card who is a recent Columbia graduate, reportedly acting on an order to revoke his green card.

We know there are more students at Columbia and other universities across the country who have engaged in pro-terrorist, anti-Semitic, anti-American activity, and the Trump Administration will not tolerate it
—Donald Trump, US President

Trump said that US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Ice) took Khalil into custody after his executive order and added that similar activists on college campuses are paid agitators, not students.

Khalil, who grew up in a Palestinian refugee camp in Syria, served as a lead negotiator for the Gaza solidarity encampment at Columbia University last year, mediating between protesters and university administrators. *—Agencies*

Senate votes to confirm Lori as Labour Secretary

Washington, 11 March

The Senate on Monday confirmed Lori Chavez-DeRemer as US Labour Secretary, a Cabinet position that puts her in charge of enforcing federally mandated worker rights and protections at a time when the White House is trying to eliminate thousands of government employees. She will oversee the Department of Labour, one of several named in lawsuits challenging the authority of Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency to order layoffs and access sensitive government data. Several labour unions, including the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, endorsed Chavez-DeRemer's nomination. The Senate voted to confirm her 67–32. *—PTI*

Philippines ex-Prez Duterte held for 'crime against humanity'

MANILA, 11 MARCH

Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was arrested by police at Manila's international airport Tuesday on order of the International Criminal Court in connection with a case of crime against humanity filed against him, the Philippine government said on Tuesday.

Duterte was arrested after arriving from Hong Kong and police took him into custody on orders of the court, which has been investigating the thousands of killings that happened under the former president's deadly crackdown against illegal drugs, President Ferdinand Marcos' office said in a statement.

The ICC launched an investigation into drug killings under Duterte from 1 November, 2011, when he was still mayor of the southern city of Davao, to 16 March, 2019, as possible crimes against humanity.

Former Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte *PHOTO: X*

Duterte withdrew the Philippines in 2019 from the Rome Statute in a move that human rights activists say was aimed at escaping accountability over the killings.

- Duterte was arrested on orders of the global court, which has been investigating the thousands of killings that happened under the former president's deadly crackdown against illegal drugs

The Duterte administration opposed the global court's investigation in late 2021, arguing that Philippine authorities were already probing the allegations and the ICC did not have jurisdiction.

Appeals judges at the global court ruled in July 2023 that the investigation could resume and rejected the Duterte administration's objections. *—PTI*

ROBOCOPS ON PATROL

The Beijing Economic-Technological Development Area has launched its next-generation intelligent patrol system. Featuring unmanned vehicles and robotic patrol dogs, the initiative will boost urban security and governance, the administration said in a statement sent to the Global Times *PHOTO: GLOBAL TIMES*

REINCARNATION ROW

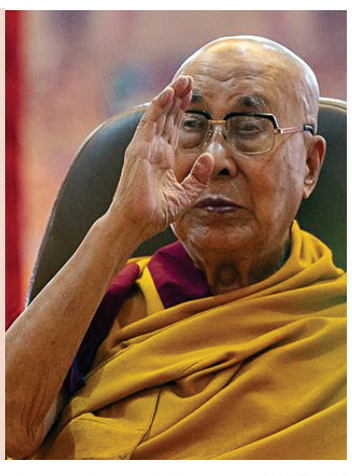
Successor will be born outside China: Dalai

BEIJING, 11 MARCH

The Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader in exile, has said that his successor will be born in the "free world" outside of China.

"Since the purpose of a reincarnation is to carry on the work of the predecessor, the new Dalai Lama will be born in the free world so that the traditional mission of the Dalai Lama – that is, to be the voice for universal compassion, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, and the symbol of Tibet embodying the aspirations of the Tibetan people – will continue," the Dalai Lama wrote in Voice for the Voiceless, a new book released on Tuesday by the 89-year-old.

China considers Tibet as an integral part of the country and views movements advocating for its greater autonomy or independence as threats to its national sovereignty.


Since the purpose of a reincarnation is to carry on the work of the predecessor, the new Dalai Lama will be born in the free world so that the traditional mission of the Dalai Lama – that is, to be the voice for universal compassion, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, and the symbol of Tibet embodying the aspirations of the Tibetan people – will continue
—Dalai Lama

Beijing has labelled the current Dalai Lama a 'separatist' *PHOTO: X*

Beijing has labelled the current Dalai Lama, who was identified as the reincarnation of his predecessor at two years old, a "separatist". The Dalai Lama, who shunned his political role to in 2011 to focus on spirituality, has denied advocating Tibetan independence. He supports a "middle way" approach, which would grant the mainly Buddhist territory greater autonomy.

Meanwhile, China's foreign ministry has criticised the Dalai Lama for his claim that his successor would be born outside China, reports said.

The ministry reportedly said, "Reincarnations of the living Buddha should abide by the regulations of the country… Reincarnation is a special tradition of Tibetan Buddhism and the name of the living Buddha of Dalai Lama was identified by the central government." *—Agencies*

Maradona's medical team faces trial for homicide

BUENOS AIRES, 11 MARCH

Seven members of the medical team that treated Argentine soccer legend Diego Maradona before his death are facing trial for homicide from Tuesday in Buenos Aires.

The stems from allegations that the healthcare professionals' negligence contributed to the World Cup winner's death in 2020 at the age of 60, which triggered an outpouring of grief in his native Argentina and across the world.

Maradona suffered a heart attack at his rented house in Tigre, an affluent district north of Argentina's capital Buenos Aires, where he had been recovering from surgery to remove a blood clot in his brain weeks earlier.

Widely perceived as one of the sport's greatest players, Maradona famously led Argentina to victory in the 1986 World Cup and inspired his compatriots with a rags-to-riches story that vaulted him from poverty in the hardscrabble outskirts of Buenos Aires to international reverence.

Diego Maradona *PHOTO: X*

Maradona had struggled with drug addiction, obesity and alcoholism for decades, and reportedly came close to death in 2000 and 2004. But prosecutors concluded that – were it not for the negligence of his doctors – his death could have been avoided. *—Agencies*

IndusInd stock tanks 23%; hits 52-week low

Bank's review found portfolio inconsistencies, causing Rs 2,100 crore impact on net worth

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

Shares of IndusInd Bank tumbled 23 per cent on Tuesday, hitting a new 52-week low of Rs 705.35, following the private lender's disclosure of discrepancies in its derivatives portfolio. The stock plunged as much as 22.8 per cent on the BSE to Rs 695.25 and 21.67 per cent on the NSE. The stock price of the private lender was quoting at its lowest level since November 2020.

The downturn follows IndusInd Bank's statement on Monday, revealing that an internal review of its derivatives portfolio uncovered inconsistencies in account balances, prompting a post-tax markdown impact of 2.35 per cent on net worth. The estimated financial impact stands at approximately Rs 2,100 crore.

Following the announcement, leading brokerage firms downgraded their ratings on IndusInd Bank, cutting their target prices. The BSE Sensex declined 255 points (0.34%) to 73,860.17, while the NSE Nifty dropped 47.65 points (0.21%) to 22,412.65 amid market jitters.

PHOTO: X

IndusInd Bank's Deputy CEO Arun Khurana clarified in an analyst call that the discrepancies are not linked to client accounts, but did not provide further details. He assured that from 1 April, the bank will cease internal trades, and existing trades have been unwound.

The bank is currently undergoing an external audit, with a report expected by the end of March 2024. Despite the crisis, IndusInd Bank maintains that its profitability and capital adequacy remain strong.

Promoter Ashok Hinduja reassured investors, stating that the bank has a capital adequacy ratio above 15 per cent, and promoters are ready to inject funds if needed.

"Shareholders shouldn't panic. These are routine problems. I understand their concern is over why they were not informed earlier. Banking businesses are based on integrity and trust," he said.

This controversy comes after the RBI's decision to extend the CEO's tenure by only one year instead of three, adding to investor concerns. IndusInd Bank's market capitalisation has eroded by nearly Rs 18,000 crore, intensifying scrutiny over its financial health. *—PTI with Agencies*

WHY INDUSIND BANK SHARES FELL?

- **Internal review findings:** IndusInd Bank uncovered discrepancies in its derivatives portfolio during an internal review of 'Other Asset and Other Liability' accounts
- **Regulatory compliance:** The review was conducted after the RBI issued new guidelines on accounting for derivatives, effective 1 April, 2024.
- **External Validation:** IndusInd Bank has hired an external agency to validate the findings, with a final report expected soon.

BROKERAGE CONCERNS

- **ICICI Securities:** Lowered FY25 estimates, citing pressure from derivative losses, leadership uncertainty, and microfinance challenges.
- **Motilal Oswal:** Warned that the Q4FY25 earnings may be impacted as the bank absorbs losses through profit & loss (P&L) adjustments..
- **Leadership Uncertainty:** RBI granted only a one-year extension to the bank's MD, instead of the three years proposed by the board, raising investor concerns

Gold edges up to Rs 88,790, silver drops by Rs 350

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

Snapping its three-day losing run, gold rebounded to Rs 88,790 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid firm global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity rose by Rs 40 to Rs 88,790 per 10 grams from the last close of Rs 88,750 per 10 grams. Gold of 99.5 per cent also went up by Rs 40 to Rs 88,390 per 10 grams. However, silver prices declined by Rs 350 to Rs 98,900 per kg. The white metal had settled at Rs 99,250 per kg on Monday. Comex gold futures for April delivery rose by USD 19.30 or 0.67 per cent to USD 2,918.70 per ounce in the global markets. Meanwhile, spot gold advanced 0.82 per cent to USD 2,912.43 per ounce *—PTI*

Rupee settles 10 P higher at 87.21 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 11 MARCH

The rupee recovered from steep losses and settled with a gain of 10 paise at 87.21 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday as the American currency index fell to its four-month low level and crude oil prices also stayed subdued. A volatile trend in domestic equity markets and outflow of foreign capital amid fear of recession in the US and trade-related uncertainties restricted the recovery in the local currency, forex traders said. At the inter-bank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 87.37 and touched the day's low of 87.39 against the greenback. The unit also strengthened up to 87.17 before ending the session at 87.21 (provisional) against the dollar, 10 paise higher compared to its previous closing level. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by 0.58 per cent at 103.35, close to the level seen on 5 November. *—PTI*

SEBI warns IIFL Capital over due diligence in debt

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has issued an administrative warning to IIFL Capital Services concerning the due diligence processes in its merchant banking division's handling of debt issues. The warning, dated 7 March 2025, follows an inspection of the company's activities between 1 April 2022 and 30 April 2024. Sebi raised concerns about the disclosure of individual breakdowns of issue-related expenses and the timelines for payment of fees to intermediaries in the offer documents. In response to Sebi's findings, IIFL Capital stated there would be no monetary impact as a result of the regulator's action. Following the announcement, IIFL Capital's shares rose by 0.22 per cent to Rs 205.30 on the Bombay Stock Exchange. *—PTI*

India will need 30,000 pilots in 15-20 yrs: Minister

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

India's Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu announced that the country will need 30,000 new pilots over the next 15 to 20 years, as domestic airlines expand their operations with over 1,700 aircraft on order. During a recent event marking the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for 200 trainer aircraft, Naidu highlighted that there are currently 6,000 to 7,000 active pilots in India. The ministry is assessing 38 Flying Training Organisations (FTOs) to enhance pilot training standards and aims to position India as a global training hub. With India's civil aviation sector being one of the fastest-growing worldwide, initiatives are also underway to categorise airports, potentially designating specific facilities for cargo operations and FTOs. *—PTI*

SENSEX DROPS 12.85 PTS

Sensex, Nifty settle almost flat in lacklustre trade

MUMBAI, 11 MARCH

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended on a flat note in a lacklustre trade on Tuesday as investors preferred to remain on the sidelines awaiting further triggers ahead of macroeconomic data release.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 12.85 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 74,102.32. During the day, it slumped 451.57 points or 0.61 per cent to hit a low of 73,663.60.

However, the broader index Nifty rose 37.60 points or 0.17 per cent to close at 22,497.90. In the session, the benchmark advanced by 61.8 points or 0.27 per cent to hit a high of 22,522.10.

From the Sensex pack, IndusInd Bank, Infosys, Bajaj Finserv, Mahindra & Mahindra, Zomato, Hindustan Unilever, Power Grid, Axis Bank, UltraTech Cement, Adani Ports, and Tata Consultancy Services were among the laggards.

On the other hand, Sun Pharmaceuticals, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, HCL Technologies, Maruti Suzuki India, Larsen & Toubro, Reliance Industries, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Titan were the gainers.

PHOTO: PTI

Global oil benchmark Brent crude rose 0.71 per cent to USD 69.77 a barrel.

Meanwhile, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 485.41 crore, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) picked up equities worth Rs 263.51 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

On Monday, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 217.41 points to settle at 74,115.17. The Nifty declined by 92.20 points to close at 22,460.30. *—PTI*

Tesla shares plunge amid eroding investor confidence

Shares of Tesla have seen a significant decline as investor confidence wanes following Elon Musk's financial backing of President Trump's campaign. On Monday, shares fell by 14 per cent to $226.11, their lowest since late October, as global sales falter. Analysts attribute the slump to Musk's alignment with far-right politics, which appears to alienate its environmentally-conscious customer base. Sales have plummeted 45% in Europe and nearly halved in China. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

US market sell-off deepens amid economic concerns

NEW YORK, 10 MARCH

The US stock market's decline worsened on Monday, potentially marking its worst day in years as Wall Street grapples with President Donald Trump's economic policies. The S&P 500 plummeted 3.2 per cent in afternoon trading, its steepest drop since the unprecedented inflation crisis of 2022.

Dow Jones Industrial Average saw a decline of 1,042 points (2.4 per cent), and the Nasdaq composite fell 4.6 per cent .

Investor concern centres on the economic consequences of Trump's fluctuating tariffs, with their volatility possibly leading to a paralysis of corporate and consumer confidence. The S&P 500 has now declined 9.1 per cent from its all-time high on 19 February.

Surveys signal a deteriorating economic outlook, and indicators from the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta suggest the economy may already be shrinking. Trump, in a recent interview, acknowledged a potential transition period as the US adjusts to his policies aimed at bringing manufacturing jobs back.

While the job market remains stable, forecasts for economic growth are being revised downwards. Analysts at Goldman Sachs cut their US growth estimate from 2.2 per cent to 1.7 per cent for the end of 2025, citing increasing tariff impacts. Big Tech companies and consumer-dependent stocks suffered notably, with Nvidia down 21 per cent this year. *—ANI*

PHOTO: X

Amazon supports women sellers with disabilities

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

E-commerce giant Amazon India has teamed up with the Youth4Jobs Foundation to support women sellers with disabilities, providing crucial resources, tools, and training to help them thrive in the digital marketplace.

As part of this collaboration, the Amazon Saheli programme will conduct workshops and offer onboarding and account management support tailored to these women entrepreneurs.

Participants will receive hands-on training in various areas, including digital marketing, performance marketing, product listing optimisation, and advertising solutions, to establish a strong online presence. Additionally, they will gain access to data-driven insights and metrics. *—PTI*

Nissan CEO steps down amid financial struggles

TOKYO, 11 MARCH

Nissan Motor Co. has announced a leadership change following disappointing financial results, with chief executive **Makoto Uchida** stepping down. The company revealed on Tuesday that Ivan Espinosa, currently serving as chief planning officer, will take over Uchida's position. Uchida is set to remain on the board until Nissan's upcoming general shareholders' meeting.

The decision comes in the wake of Uchida's recent decision to cancel discussions with Japanese rival, Honda Motor Co., regarding a proposed joint holding company intended to integrate their businesses. Uchida expressed concerns that the focus of the talks had shifted towards making Nissan a subsidiary of Honda, which he deemed unacceptable.

He affirmed that while formal talks have ceased, collaboration on specific projects, particularly in electric vehicles and research, would continue as part of their strategic partnership.

PHOTO: PTI

- The decision comes in the wake of Uchida's recent decision to cancel discussions with Japanese rival, Honda Motor Co., regarding a proposed joint holding company

Nissan has projected an alarming loss of 80 billion yen (approximately £540 million) for the full fiscal year, causing further scrutiny over its leadership and strategy for recovery.

The changes in leadership signal a critical moment for the automaker as it seeks to navigate its financial difficulties. *—PTI*

India's venture capital funding rises 43%

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

India's venture capital (VC) ecosystem demonstrated remarkable growth in 2024, with funding escalating by 43 per cent year-on-year to reach USD 13.7 billion, as reported by Bain & Company and the Indian Venture Capital Association (IVCA).

This upswing was propelled by a 45 per cent surge in deal activity, culminating in 1,270 transactions and reinforcing India's status as the second largest market for venture capital and growth funding within the Asia-Pacific region.

Small- and medium-ticket deals (under USD 50 million) constituted approximately 95 per cent of the total transactions, increasing by 1.4 times. In contrast, larger deals of USD 50 million and above nearly doubled, rebounding to pre-pandemic levels, while megadeals (over USD 100 million) also saw a 1.6 times increase.

PHOTO: X

The report highlighted that consumer technology, software and SaaS—including generative AI—and fintech sectors attracted more than 60 per cent of the overall funding.

In particular, consumer technology emerged as a leader, securing USD 5.4 billion, driven by significant investments in quick commerce, edtech, and B2C commerce, with notable funding rounds for Zepto, Meesho, and Lenskart. *—PTI*

Progcap offers Rs 10L loans to women-led MSMEs

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

MSME-focused fintech Progcap has unveiled a new initiative aimed at offering collateral-free loans of up to Rs 10 lakh to women-led small and medium enterprises over the next three years. Backed by notable investors including Peak XV (formerly Sequoia Capital India), Google, and Tiger Capital, Progcap aims to empower 10,000 women-led MSMEs in semi-urban and rural India by FY27.

The ProgShakti Development Programme will enable women entrepreneurs to access financial support.

This initiative aligns with the Indian government's 'Viksit Bharat' vision for 2047, which aims to boost women's workforce participation to 70 per cent. *—ANI*

Zydus acquires Amplitude Surgical for Rs 256.8M

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

Zydus Lifesciences has announced exclusive negotiations to acquire an 85.6 per cent stake in France-based Amplitude Surgical for Rs 256.8 million.

The Ahmedabad-headquartered pharmaceutical company is in discussions with PAI Partners, Amplitude Surgical's management, and two minority shareholders regarding the acquisition.

Amplitude Surgical, a leader in European MedTech, specializes in high-quality lower-limb orthopaedic technologies, including the design and development of knee and hip prostheses. In the fiscal year ending 30 June, 2024, the company reported sales of Rs 106 million and an EBITDA of Rs 27.1 million. *—PTI*

Duty-free Urad imports extended to March 2026

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

The Indian government has announced the extension of duty-free imports of urad until 31 March 2026, as per a notification by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT). This provision was previously set to expire at the end of March 2023. Myanmar remains the primary exporter of urad to India, accounting for USD 549 million of the USD 601.12 million worth of imports from April to November this fiscal year. Further imports are sourced from Singapore, Thailand, and Brazil. This policy aims to stabilise domestic prices for the commodity. In the last fiscal, bilateral trade between India and Myanmar reached USD 1.74 billion. India, the world's largest producer and consumer of urad, primarily cultivates the crop in states such as Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

NEW SURVEY

2 in 3 people want banks to reimburse scam victims

MUMBAI, 11 MARCH

A recent survey reveals that a significant majority of Indian bank customers expect financial institutions to take responsibility for scam-related losses. Conducted by US-based analytics firm FICO in 2024, the survey encompassed 11,000 consumers across 14 countries, including India, focusing on their experiences with real-time payments and banking fraud.

The findings indicate that two in three Indian consumers (66 per cent) believe banks should always reimburse victims of scams. Furthermore, over half (57 per cent) are calling for improved fraud detection systems, while 50 per cent emphasise the need for increased scam warnings to enhance their protection.

PHOTO: X

The report, titled the '2024 Scams Impact Survey: India', highlights that 37 per cent of respondents would hold banks accountable if they fell prey to a scam. Despite these concerns, 87 per cent express satisfaction with the resolution processes currently in place for scam complaints.

Dattu Kompella, Managing Director of FICO in Asia, stated, "Indian consumers expect their banks to take the lead in the fight against fraudsters. When customers are dissatisfied with how a scam is handled, the repercussions for banks can be significant both financially and in terms of reputation."

The survey also noted the potential actions customers might take if they are dissatisfied with their bank's scam management. More than half (56 per cent) would file a complaint with their bank, while 30 per cent would escalate the issue to regulators. Additionally, 3 per cent indicated they would consider switching banks altogether. *—PTI*

MCG to host day-night Australia-Eng clash

MELBOURNE, 11 MARCH

The 150th-anniversary test between Australia and England will be held under lights at the Melbourne Cricket Ground from March 11-15, 2027. Cricket Australia announced on Tuesday that the historic match will be the first day-night men's test at the MCG. The famous stadium on the edge of downtown Melbourne hosted the first cricket test in 1877 and the centenary test between Australia and England in 1977. Australia won by a 45-run margin in both of those matches. "The 150th anniversary test at the MCG will be one of the great cricket events, and playing under lights will be a fantastic way to celebrate both our game's rich heritage and test cricket's modern evolution," Cricket Australia chief executive Todd Greenberg said. "It will also help ensure more people can attend and watch what will be a fantastic occasion.—*PTI*

SAFF U19 C'ship: Hosts India draw with Nepal & SL

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

Hosts India were drawn alongside Nepal and Sri Lanka in Group B of the SAFF U19 Championship 2025 in the draw conducted in Kathmandu on Tuesday. The Golden Jubilee Stadium in Yupia, Arunachal Pradesh, will host the third edition of the regional U19 men's tournament from May 9 to 18, 2025. The venue also hosted the Santosh Trophy final round last year. Maldives, Bhutan, and Bangladesh were drawn into Group A. For the draw, the teams were seeded in three pots based on the latest FIFA men's rankings as of December 2024. The top two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals that will be played on 16 May. The final will take place on 18 May. India are the defending champions, having beaten Pakistan 3-0 in the final of the 2023 edition held in Kathmandu. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Injured Neymar under fire for missing semifinal

SAO PAULO, 11 MARCH

Neymar's justification for missing a semifinal with Santos was criticised because he was seen at Carnival last week. Santos lost to archrival Corinthians 2-1 on Sunday in the semifinals of the Sao Paulo state championship, and Neymar sat on the bench for all 90 minutes. On Monday, he said he had a minor injury without elaborating. Days earlier, the striker was photographed at Rio de Janeiro's Sambadrome, the venue for the glitzy Carnival parade. Neymar, who rejoined his boyhood club Santos in January, attended the Carnival parade only hours after being substituted in the second half of another Sao Paulo state championship match on March 2 because of an apparent left thigh injury. —*PTI*

Late Stuani penalty rescues point for Girona

BARCELONA, 11 MARCH

Christian Stuani's late penalty gave Girona a 1-1 draw at Espanyol in La Liga on Monday. The 38-year-old Uruguayan scored with three minutes remaining to rob Espanyol of a vital three points in its fight to avoid the drop. The Barcelona-based side was 15th in the 20-team table, only two points clear of the relegation zone. Girona was 13th, five points above it.Stuani's goal was also a blow to Espanyol scorer Jofre Carreras.Carreras put the home side ahead four minutes into the second half with a spectacular solo effort that will likely be a goal-of-the-season contender.—*PTI*

Newcastle beats West Ham to reach League Cup final

Newcastle will return to London to face Liverpool

LONDON, 11 MARCH

Bruno Guimaraes's goal lifts Newcastle past West Ham in League Cup final warmups *PHOTO: X/@NUFC*

Newcastle warmed up for the English League Cup final by laboring past West Ham 1-0 in the Premier League on Monday.

Saudi-owned Newcastle will return to London to face Liverpool at Wembley on Sunday, seeking its first domestic trophy since the 1955 FA Cup.

However, Eddie Howe's men will doubtlessly need more penetration if they are to beat an in-form Liverpool.

Newcastle rose three places into sixth in the Premier League, but it was a lacklustre performance in a stuffy encounter that provided few moments of excitement.

The only goal came from Bruno Guimaraes in the 63rd minute. Harvey Barnes lofted a ball into the six-yard box, and the Newcastle captain got the slightest of touches to take it past the goalkeeper.

Guimaraes said all focus will turn to Wembley as Newcastle prepares for a potentially historic occasion.

"It is massive for the club's history, and we want to be part of it," the Brazilian said. "We know we're going to play against one of the best teams.

"I believe that we can win. In a final, anything can happen. I believe our fans can make the difference for us. We want to make history for this club. It is a long time for the fans without a trophy."

West Ham, meanwhile, lamented a loss that robbed it of its first hat trick of wins since December 2023. It sits 16th in the 20-team Premier League.

"We started both halves very well, it was a tight game, and we're disappointed with the goal," Hammers boss Graham Potter said. "I felt for the players because they gave everything not enough to win the game but enough to get something from it." —*PTI*

SERIES AGAINST PAKISTAN

With IPL on horizon, NZ rest T20 regulars

WELLINGTON, 11 MARCH

PHOTO: X

New Zealand have rested a majority of their T20 regulars for the home series against Pakistan with the IPL around the corner.

The series, comprising five T20Is, begins on 16 March, while the IPL begins on 22 March.

Michael Bracewell, who was one of the main performers for New Zealand in the Champions Trophy, will lead the side in the absence of Mitchell Santner.

Besides Bracewell, six more players in the T20 squad featured in the 50-over Champions Trophy. New Zealand lost the final to India on Sunday.

Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, and white-ball captain Santner were unavailable for selection due to IPL commitments.

Kyle Jamieson and Will O'Rourke have been included only for the first three games of the series, as the selectors seek to manage the workload of the pace bowlers returning from the Champions Trophy.

Matt Henry, who finished as the leading wicket-taker in the tournament despite missing the final through injury, has been selected for games four and five, subject to further assessment once the ODI squad arrives home on Wednesday.

Bevon Jacobs, who was part of the squad for the recent T20 series against Sri Lanka, was unavailable due to IPL commitments, while Kane Williamson wasn't considered for selection after making himself unavailable.

Selector Sam Wells said the Pakistan series was important for several reasons. —*PTI*

INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE

Mumbai beat Blues, qualify for playoffs

Mumbai City FC players are celebrating after winning the ISL 2024-25 match against Bengaluru FC *PHOTO: MUMBAI CITY FC*

BENGALURU, 11 MARCH

Mumbai City FC is in the playoffs of the Indian Super League. Mumbai reached the playoffs after beating Bengaluru FC 2-0 in their last match in the league. With this, Odisha FC was eliminated.

The top six teams qualify for the playoffs. Mumbai is in sixth place. Bengaluru FC, who are in fourth place, had already secured the playoffs. Lalianswala Changte and Nikos Karelis scored Mumbai's goals. Both goals were in the first half. This is both teams' last game of the season in the ISL, and currently ranked fourth in the table, Bengaluru FC have 38 points.

On the other hand, the Islanders have 33 points and are seventh on the table. Both teams will try to end their campaign with a thumping win. Follow the live football scores and updates of the Bengaluru FC Vs Mumbai City FC match of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25. Vikram Partap Singh of Mumbai City FC attempted a left-footed shot from the right side of the six-yard box, which was blocked.

Then, the fourth official added six minutes of extra time in the second half. —*PTI*

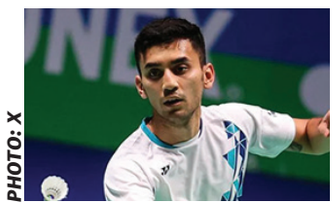


PHOTO: X

All England Open: Sen ahead, Prannoy exits

BIRMINGHAM, 11 MARCH

India's Lakshya Sen fought his way back to reach the second round of the All England Championships on Tuesday, while compatriot HS Prannoy was eliminated in the opening round of the men's singles competition here. Lakshya, ranked 15th in the world, came from behind to defeat Chinese Taipei's world No. 37, SU Li Yang, with a 13-21, 21-17, 21-15 win in the opening round of the Super 1000 event. The 23-year-old from Almora will face Indonesia's third seed Jonatan Christie next. Lakshya had defeated Christie en route to his fourth place finish at the Paris Olympics last year. Prannoy, a bronze medallist at the 2023 World Championships and Asian Games, struggled against France's Toma Junior Popov, who is ranked 17th. Prannoy fought for 53 minutes before going down 19-21, 16-21. —*PTI*

Lavanya takes one-shot lead in sixth leg of WPGT

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

Gurugram, Rookie Lavanya Jadon birdied the closing hole to take sole lead at 2-under in the first round of the sixth leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour at the Gary Player-designed DLF Golf & Country Club here on Tuesday.

Gurugram, Rookie Lavanya Jadon birdied the closing hole to take sole lead at 2-under in the first round of the sixth leg of Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour at the Gary Player designed DLF Golf & Country Club here on Tuesday.

Lavanya had five birdies against three bogeys in a round of 70.

The Hero Order of Merit leader, Sneha Singh, seemed to be set for a very low round as she was four-under through 13 holes before hitting a disastrous patch as she bogeyed four holes in a row from the 14th to the 17th.

That saw her drop to even par, but a birdie on the closing 18th ensured a 1-under card and a tie for second place with Anvvi Dahhiya, who finished more than an hour before her. The highlight of Sneha's round was an eagle on the Par-4 second, where she holed her second shot.

It was the only eagle of the day.Overall, Sneha had six birdies and an eagle against five bogeys and a double bogey.Anvvi Dahhiya, a promising amateur, had five birdies against four bogeys to be one shot behind at 1-under 71.

Vani Kapoor, aiming for a hat-trick of wins after winning the previous two legs, shot even par 72 with two birdies on the 9th and the 14th.

Ironically, she dropped shots on Par-5s, the eighth and the 18th in her 72 for sole fourth place. —*PTI*

ICC unlikely to offer any explanation to PCB

KARACHI, 11 MARCH

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is unlikely to receive any "formal clarification" from the ICC on the perceived snub during the closing ceremony of the Champions Trophy in Dubai.

India beat New Zealand by four wickets in the title clash on Sunday to win the tournament for the third time.The controversy erupted when Sumair Ahmed, who is chief operating officer of the PCB and was the tournament director of the Champions Trophy, was not invited on stage for the final presentation."We have filed a formal complaint with the ICC as what happened is unacceptable to us," a PCB official said on Tuesday. However, according to ICC sources, the PCB won't be given any formal explanation."If the PCB mandarins look up, even ICC CEO Geoff Allardice wasn't present on stage. —*PTI*

PCB slashes match fees in domestic cricket

KARACHI, 11 MARCH

In a stunning development, the Pakistan Cricket Board has resorted to cost-cutting measures, including slashing the match fees of players in domestic cricket, raising questions about the financial health of the sport's apex body in the country.

The PCB has reduced the match fees of cricketers participating in the upcoming National T20 Championship from 100,000 rupees per match to 10,000 per match, with reserve players getting 5000 per match. The tournament begins on March 14.

The reduction in match fees has caused concern among players and the board is also considering spending less on development of domestic cricket. According to sources, the head of domestic cricket in the PCB, Abdullah Khurrum Niazi, has been "reducing facilities" for domestic players in the last few months. —*PTI*

Inter midfielder Piotr could be out with calf injury

MILAN, 11 MARCH

Zielinski could be out for a few weeks with a calf strain *PHOTO: @X / INTER_EN*

Inter Milan midfielder Piotr Zielinski could be out for a few weeks with a calf strain.

Zielinski is set to miss Tuesday's return game against Feyenoord in the Champions League round of 16 after he was injured on Saturday in a 3-2 win over Monza in Serie A.

Zielinski came on as a substitute in the 70th minute but had to be helped off the field just three minutes later.

The Polish midfielder strained the medial gastrocnemius muscle, part of his right calf, the club said on Monday.

Zielinski has played 33 times for Inter in all competitions this season, scoring twice.

However, Inter will be boosted by the return of first-choice goalkeeper Yann Sommer after he missed the past three matches with a broken thumb. Nerazzurri coach Simone Inzaghi confirmed on Monday that Sommer will start in goal against Feyenoord. —*PTI*

WPA GP off to a dull start

NEW DELHI, 11 MARCH

The absence of star para-athletes like javelin thrower Sumit Antil and discus exponent Yogesh Kathuniya came as a dampener as India began its campaign in the three-day World Para Athletics Grand Prix on a sedate note here on Tuesday.

With the Para Athletics World Championships scheduled in September, several top Indian athletes are missing the Grand Prix because "they are training as per their international schedule", said Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) president and two-time gold-medallist javelin thrower at the Paralympic Games Devendra Jhajharia.In the absence of several Indian and foreign para athletes, who had initially confirmed their participation but pulled out for various reasons, there were several events where the participation was a bare minimum in some disciplines just one athlete participated.

The men's high jump T42 final for those with single above the knee amputations or a disability that is comparable saw just one athlete, Ramsingbhai Gobindbhai Padhiyar, competing and taking the top spot.

Three others Lokesh Mantra, Shailesh Kumar and Varun Singh Bhati pulled out.In men's javelin throw (F33, F34) for those with a moderately affected movement and coordination across the whole body, or affecting part of the body which affect their movement to a high degree in the legs only two para athletes took part with Uzbekistan's Oybek Egamnazarov emerging on top with a best throw of 18.05m. —*PTI*

EYE ON THE PODIUM

Meet F1's biggest rookie intake in years

LONDON, 11 MARCH

Andrea Kimi Antonelli once hid in a stack of tires to get through security and into the Formula 1 paddock. No, the 18-year-old Italian is Lewis Hamilton's successor at Mercedes.

Antonelli is among F1's biggest intake of new drivers in years as top teams put some trust in youth. Six of the 20 drivers on the 2025 grid are starting their first full seasons in F1. Some could potentially compete for wins. Others already risk losing a hard-won F1 seat.

An unexpectedly talented Formula 2 field last season came at a time when some F1 teams were keen to move on from older drivers like Sergio Perez and Valtteri Bottas. Switching in 2025 gives teams a chance to let youngsters gain experience before the F1 car design rules change radically for 2026. The first time Antonelli visited an F1 paddock was at age eight in 2014 when his father, Marco, who ran a team in a support series, hid him in a stack of tires under an umbrella to get past security and into the German Grand Prix. "That was a cool experience," he said last month. Antonelli had a stellar record in junior series and was sixth in F2 last year, but a heavy crash in practice for Mercedes at Monza in August was a tough introduction to F1. The Red Bull driver is the odd man out in this list because he's taken part in 11 F1 races since 2023, though never a full season. He says he'll feel "more like a rookie" at the start of the season on tracks he hasn't raced before. Partnering four-time champion Max Verstappen as the replacement for Perez is a daunting task for Lawson, who knocked Verstappen out of qualifying in only his third F1 race in Singapore in 2023. The New Zealander needs to justify Red Bull's decision to elevate him over his 2024 teammate and former roommate Yuki Tsunoda, who outperformed Lawson over their six races together last year. It's less than a year since Bearman burst onto the scene in F1 with a combative seventh-place finish for Ferrari in Saudi Arabia while Carlos Sainz Jr. was sidelined because of surgery. He'd never previously raced in Jeddah and was racing with two days' notice. Bearman beat experienced teammate Nico Hülkenberg in two races for Haas later that year and is now a full-time Haas driver for 2025. —*PTI*

Andrea Kimi Antonelli

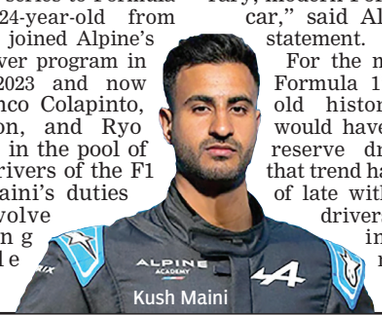
India's Kush joins reserve drivers at Alpine F1 team

LONDON, 11 MARCH

India's Kush Maini was on Tuesday promoted to the reserve driver's role at the Alpine Formula 1 team ahead of the season opener in Melbourne on March 16.

Maini competes in Formula 2, a feeder series to Formula 1. The 24-year-old from Bengaluru joined Alpine's junior driver program in October 2023 and now joins Franco Colapinto, Paul Aron, and Ryo Hirakawa in the pool of reserve drivers of the F1 team. "Maini's duties will involve offering valuable support to the team's car development and set-up objectives using the driver-in-loop simulator at Enstone, as well as participating in its TPC (testing of previous cars) Programme aimed at improving skills at the wheel of a contemporary, modern Formula One car," said Alpine in a statement.

For the majority of Formula 1's 75-year-old history, teams would have only one reserve driver, but that trend has changed of late with multiple drivers performing that role. —*PTI*



Kush Maini